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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The Fourth Dimension

Conceptualizations of Spirituality

BY

Nancy Carol Goddard

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF NURSING.

FACULTY OF NURSING

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1995

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Date: Sept. 27, 1995

He that loseth wealth, loseth much; he that loseth friends, loseth more; but he that loseth his spirit loseth all.

Spanish Maxim

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE FOURTH DIMENSION: Conceptualizations of Spirituality, submitted by NANCY CAROL GODDARD in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF NURSING.

Dr. M. Allen

Dr. P. A. Field

Dr. J. Dossetor

Date: Sept 27, 1995

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

Lorne - my husband, lover, best friend, and soulmate.
You truly are all that I ever could have dreamed
of in a husband. I could never have done it without you!

My mother and father, **Gwen and Bert Brown**, whose
faith in me has never waivered. You are very
special parents!

My children, **Jeffrey, Kevin, and Kimberley**, whose
encouragement, love, and assistance were there
whenever needed!

and

To my **God**, whose inspiration led me to this project!

Truly, I have been blessed in my life and in my relationships. I love you all!

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to clarity the concept of spirituality. A theoretical analysis of nursing and related disciplinary literature formed the data base for the study; from it, the critical attributes and thematic structure of the human spiritual dimension were derived, a conceptual model was diagrammed, and a synthesized definition of spirituality was developed. The three critical attributes of spirituality were discovered to be: integrative energy; relational connections to God (god, deity, value, or force greater than self), others, self, and nature; and self-transcendence. The conceptual model illustrates the developmental process and thematic structure of spirituality. Identification of the critical attributes led to the following synthesized definition of spirituality. *Spirituality is a universal, innate, integrative energy force, with transcendent potential, that seeks to establish and maintain relational connections with existential and/or metaphysical realms.* Recommendations for future research focused primarily on the further development and testing of the conceptual model.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION **1**

Spirituality and Metaphysics 4

Statement of the Problem 6

Research Question 8

Overview of the Thesis 8

Chapter Summary 9

II. METHOD **10**

Theoretical Perspective: Concept Development and Hermeneutics 10

Sampling of the Literature 14

Data Collection and Retrieval 15

Data Analysis 17

Reliability and Validity 18

Ethical Considerations 22

III.SELECTED CONCEPTUAL CONTEXTS **23**

Dictionary Definitions 23

The Context of Mythological and Poetic Literature **25**

Mythology 25

Judeo-Christian tradition 29

Greek tradition 30

Roman tradition 32

Norse tradition 32

Native Indian tradition 33

Inuit tradition 36

Contemporary mythology 39

Poetic literature 40

Section Summary 46

The Historical Context 48

Greco-Roman period 500 BC - 300 AD 49

Medieval, or Middle Age period 400 AD - 1350 AD 51

Renaissance period 1300 AD - 1650 AD 53

Enlightenment period 1600 AD - 1850 AD 54

Romantic period 1774 AD - 1825 AD 56

Modern period 1800 AD - Present 56

Section Summary 58

Aboriginal Cultural Context 61

Traditional Sociospiritual Perspectives 62

Inuit Culture (Arctic region) 63

Innu Culture (Eastern Subarctic and Woodland regions) 66

Dene Culture (Western Subarctic region) 68

Plains and Prairie Culture (Central U. S. region) 70

Dinwe Culture (Southwestern region) 72

Colonial and Ecclesiastical Influences 74

Section Summary 76

The Context of Developmental Life Cycle Stages 78

Childhood groups 79

Adult groups 83

Elderly, or late Adult group 85

Section Summary 88

Contemporary Theoretical Context 91

Spirituality and the Psychological Dimension 92

Spirituality and Religiosity 94

Spiritual Potential as a Universal Phenomenon 97

Spirituality as Integrative Energy 98

Spirituality as Relational Connections 99

Faith 102
Immanence 103
Presence 105
Spirituality as Transcendence 111
Spirituality as Meaning and Purpose in Life 113
Spirituality and Nursing Theory 114
Section Summary 116
The Illness Context **118**
Chronic Illness 120
Hope 122
Terminal Illness 124
Chronic and Terminal Illness in Children 130
Section Summary 132

IV.SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS **134**
Summary of Findings **134**
Conclusions and Model Development **142**
Implications for the Advancement of Nursing Knowledge **146**
Recommendations for Future Research Directions **148**

REFERENCES

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE I: DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS MODEL OF THE HUMAN SPIRITUAL DIMENSION 144

Chapter I

It has happened often.
Roused into myself from my body -- outside everything else and
inside myself -- my gaze has met a beauty wondrous and great.

Plotinus

Introduction

Human spirituality has been a subject of philosophical speculation and discourse from time immemorial. It is a well-recognized and generally accepted phenomenon in virtually all known human cultural and social systems, past and present. Few would deny its existence as a dimension of human nature or fail to acknowledge its pervasive influence on human thought, behaviour, and perceptions of well-being. Although the nature of the relationship between spirituality and health currently remains unclear, the recent resurgence of interest in non-medical sources of healing and holistic medical practices, as alternatives or adjuncts to allopathic medicine, is causing increased speculation regarding the nature of this link. At the same time, the current economic crisis in health care makes it imperative that all potential sources of healing be investigated and evaluated, including those that have heretofore been neglected or considered to be beyond the bounds of medical hegemony.

Although spirituality is assumed to be an essential component of humanistic nursing care, it is rarely considered overtly in the practice setting, as is well documented (Fish & Shelly, 1978; Forbis, 1988; Highfield & Cason, 1983; Hamner, 1990; Hungelmann, Kenkel-Rossi, Klassen, & Stollenwerk, 1985). Some authors have suggested that nurses lack sufficient knowledge regarding spirituality to feel adequately prepared to handle spiritual questions (Fish & Shelly, 1978; Hamner, 1990). Others may consider the subject too personal to discuss, or feel vulnerable due to unresolved personal spiritual issues (Forbis, 1988). Finally, still others may be reluctant to discuss metaphysical matters as a function of entrenched educational emphasis on positivistic

values (Burnard, 1987). Yet, studies of spiritual well-being indicate that by enhancing spirituality, health is positively influenced (Dickenson, 1975; Renetzky, 1979).

Written accounts of various classical scholars suggest that most cultures from antiquity through to the scientific revolution of the 16th century conceived of human beings as a trialectic of body, mind, and spirit. The mind-body, or immaterial-material, schism which was created by Descartes is still evident in many academic disciplines and continues to plague contemporary researchers. Large segments of Western society continue to hold the dichotomous view of personhood which has become the legacy of Cartesianism. Biophysiology has been separated from psychology, and spirituality has been either tacitly held in abeyance or banished entirely from the realm of "science". The pursuit of nomothetic knowledge as the primary legitimate goal of empirical science has, therefore, proceeded at the expense of potentially rich idiographic sources of knowledge which are considered beyond the bounds of objectification and verifiability. Metaphysics is seldom now considered a legitimate area of scientific inquiry, and individuals with a strongly logical-positivistic scientific philosophy are likely to dismiss metaphysical investigation altogether (Burnard, 1987).

Most nursing theories espouse holistic care as a central disciplinary tenet, however, the spiritual dimension is often mentioned only perfunctorily, or omitted altogether. Holism is a philosophy of health that encompasses the biological, psychological, sociocultural, and spiritual aspects of human beings, in constant interaction with each other and with the environment, to present a unified whole which is greater than the sum of its individual parts, or dimensions. Since holistic care connotes care of the whole person, spiritual concerns must be addressed concomitantly with physical and psychosocial concerns; nurses are expected to meet the health-related needs arising from each of these domains. Pelletier (1977) describes the following six underlying assumptions of holism:

1. All states of health and all disorders are considered to be psychosomatic. The clinician cannot limit his expertise to biomedical technology, since a psychosomatic orientation requires treating the whole person through an integrated approach.

2. Each individual is unique and represents a complex interaction of body, mind, and spirit.
3. The patient and the health practitioner share the responsibility for the healing process.
4. Health care is not exclusively the province or responsibility of orthodox medicine
5. Illness is seen as a creative opportunity for the patient to learn more about himself and his fundamental values.
6. The practitioner must come to know himself as a human being. (p. 318)

Proponents of holism frequently describe individuals as unified bio-psycho-social and spiritual beings and, notwithstanding the paradoxical use of reductionist vocabulary in terms of attempting to describe the whole by means of its parts, include spiritual dimensionality as a valued component of human nature. Although the content and boundaries of the physical, emotional, and social dimensions are clearly circumscribed in many professional literatures, the spiritual dimension has largely been neglected or has been subsumed under the psychosocial domain, yet this is inconsistent with holistic philosophy which requires integration of all dimensions. A research study to determine whether nurses recognized spiritual concerns, conducted by Highfield and Cason (1983), concluded that most nurses cannot distinguish between signs of spiritual health and those of psychosocial health. The distinction between spirituality and religiosity is also poorly delineated and the terms are often used synonymously in the literature, according to many authors (Burkhardt, 1989; DeCrane, 1994; Duke & Brown, 1979; Labun, 1988; Learn, 1993; Trice, 1990; Widerquist, 1991). Conceptual ambiguity such as this prevents adequate assessment of spirituality in therapeutic environments.

Another inherent assumption of holism is that any disruption of, or disturbance to, one dimension will necessarily influence the other dimensions; by changing the balance of dimensional relationships, health may be affected adversely or may be enhanced. Since this includes the spiritual dimension, and since health practitioners have a duty to share the healing process with the patient, care of the human spirit not only falls within the purview of health care but becomes an obligation for all health care professionals. Therefore, if holistic care is the purported goal of nursing, then the

implicit nature of spirituality must be understood and explicated since the "nurse's acknowledgement, appreciation, and respect for the spiritual meaning in a person's life (regardless of how unusual the person's belief is) can be comforting to the person" (Watson, 1985, p. 92).

Spirituality and Metaphysics

Human spirituality, as a metaphysical phenomenon, can be variously conceived depending on the underlying worldview of the conceiver. The predominant contemporary view of monism, or materialism, asserts that psychological processes are merely extended neurological functions which are explainable by electromagnetic fields or neurochemical transmitters; within this philosophy, a purely existential conceptualization of spirituality would be acceptable to the extent that it relates to the materialist perspective of brain function. Immaterialists, or dualists, on the other hand, consider many psychological states to be unintelligible using biophysiological explanations and suggest that the psychological and spiritual dimensions overlap or are interchangeable; consequently, metaphysical matters, such as existential and transcendental conceptualizations of spirituality, are of concern to adherents of these philosophies. Humanistic paradigms tend to focus on tangible and secular materialism and deny the existence of noumenal (unmediated, nonsensuous, or intuitive) and thaumatological (wondrous, or miraculous) experience, as well as eschatological concerns, which fall within the purview of metaphysics. The confusion precipitated by these incompatible and antithetical philosophies generates a dilemma for nursing as it strives to increase its professional body of knowledge.

Although the primacy of logical-positivistic ideals has remained a contentious issue amongst select philosophers since the scientific revolution disparaged metaphysics as a legitimate area of investigation, there are many reasons it is important for nursing to study metaphysical questions that cannot be answered definitively with prescribed solutions. For example, according to Sarter (1988), many of the foundational assumptions of nursing are based on metaphysics, such as the importance of holism and

the sanctity of human life and personhood; therefore, conscious reflection on ontological questions such as these may lead to the formulation of theories and philosophies which can profoundly affect the way persons live their lives (Sarter, 1988). Secondly, developing a fuller understanding of all dimensions of human nature and personhood will provide new ways of viewing health-related phenomena (Rodgers & Knafl, 1993) and increase the repertoire of available skills for nurse practitioners (Carper, 1992). As human spirituality is subjective and personal, it contains both aesthetic and personal elements of knowledge; this type of knowledge, according to Carper (1992), resists discursive formulation and requires unmediated engagement to know, also the province of metaphysics. Thirdly, although some authors suggest that foundational diversity is beneficial to the nursing profession, Donaldson and Crowley (1978) maintain that "a discipline is characterized by a unique perspective, a distinct way of viewing all phenomena, which ultimately defines the limits and nature of its inquiry" (p. 113). Without philosophical inquiry to examine the inherent epistemological origins and ontological perspectives of the many divergent theories which continue to exist within nursing, a coherent, unified discipline is impossible. A pragmatic philosophy of nursing in which diversity reigns supreme and truth is held to a relative standard, dependent upon the underlying worldview of the conceiver, precludes the development of a unified body of knowledge which is characteristic of professional disciplines (Kikuchi & Simmons, 1994). Finally, foundational inquiry which strives to clarify linguistic ambiguities and theoretical discrepancies will help to delineate the disciplinary boundaries which distinguish nursing from other domains (Manchester, 1986). The development of a broad descriptive base of knowledge, through linguistic analysis, facilitates communication through increased understanding and sharing of ideas (Rodgers & Knafl, 1993). The inherent heuristic potential of conceptual development procedures may also lead to the discovery of increasingly specific classificatory systems or taxonomic structures which can be used to refine nursing diagnostics (Rodgers & Knafl, 1993).

According to Fry (1992), "one of the problems to be avoided in any attempt to unify the development of nursing knowledge is the placement of the forms of nursing knowledge within a structure that limits inquiry" (p. 90). Many phenomena of concern to researchers exist within the human mind and are not amenable to objectification, therefore, inferential and hermeneutic methods must be used to verify their existence and extant properties. The uneasy tension between philosophy and science must be resolved if nursing is to develop a distinct and unique disciplinary perspective since the goal of both methods of inquiry is to advance knowledge. Introspection and reflection are not only legitimate methods of investigation but also underpin philosophies of empirical science, such as rationalism (Silva, 1992), and should not, therefore, be too quickly abandoned. An holistic paradigm which values contextual knowledge is more appropriate than the positivistic approach for studying human behaviour since behaviour does not occur extra-contextually; therefore, any endeavour to study human spirituality must also include contextual information.

For all of the aforementioned reasons, metaphysical questions are increasingly becoming of concern to nursing; human spirituality is one such concern. Spiritual needs and resources cannot be identified until this dimension of human nature is systematically explored, yet, to date, "western science, psychology, and even nursing have dealt very poorly with the spiritual side of human nature; it is either ignored or labelled pathological, too religious, too abstract, too extreme, or controversial" (Watson, 1988, p. 37). Increased understanding of this phenomenon, through concept development and reflexive discourse, is the first step towards the explanation of spiritual dimensionality.

Statement of the Problem

A review of selected literature was undertaken to determine the nature of extant knowledge regarding spirituality and the spiritual dimension. Assuming that nursing literature accurately reflects present paradigmatic trends, the relative paucity of nursing literature describing this phenomenon suggests that it has not been an area of major research interest. While theoretical conceptualizations of spirituality abound within

other disciplines, they remain limited in nursing literature. Although many authors verbally acknowledge spirituality as an essential component of being human, it is often pragmatically circumvented in the realities of clinical practice for a variety of reasons, not the least of which may include philosophical or conceptual confusion. No consistent definition of human spirituality was found to exist in the selected literature and blurring of conceptual boundaries between spirituality and related concepts, particularly the concept of religion, was readily apparent. The absence of conceptual consensus surrounding a definition of spiritual dimensionality precludes operational and theoretical isomorphism, thereby hampering research efforts, and interferes with effective intercollegial and interprofessional communication. Since the spiritual dimension is integral to holistic nursing practice and interpersonal interaction, its implicit nature must be explicated so its influence on health can be evaluated; however, according to Ricoeur (1981), understanding must necessarily remain anterior to explanation. Therefore, conceptual explanation cannot proceed until a deeper and fuller understanding of spirituality is achieved and forms the basis of a rich descriptive account; only then can attempts at explanation be undertaken.

The importance of this study stems from the recognition of spirituality as an essential element of personhood and its acknowledged, if poorly understood, role as a factor influencing health and healing. To nurse the whole patient in a therapeutic manner, it is necessary to use an holistic approach in which an "I-Thou" relationship is established, since this can potentially effect major life transformations (Buber, 1970). The "I-Thou" relationship can only be accomplished through an increased level of self-awareness and unmediated engagement with another; it is, according to Buber (1970), in the unconditional relational participation that a person's "spiritual substance" matures (p. 113). The manner in which spirituality is conceptualized and defined, therefore, has significant implications for professional nursing practice and for the development of a unified body of nursing knowledge. Conceptualizations of major social phenomena, including spirituality, are socially determined, culturally dependent, and emotionally

evocative images of essential aspects of human nature; they have the inherent potential to influence perceptions of well-being, attitudes, and behaviours of individuals in relation to their underlying philosophical perspective or worldview. Therefore, the purpose of this research project was to analyze and synthesize the various conceptualizations and descriptions of spirituality, using a hermeneutic approach, to increase understanding of the human spiritual dimension. A proposed theoretical definition was developed which may enhance intercollegial communication and lead to the identification of concrete indicators of human spirituality.

Research Question (s)

The primary research question which guided investigation of this phenomenon was: *What is the concept of human spirituality in nursing?* Sub-questions which were used as a framework to guide the research process included:

1. How has the concept of spirituality been defined by the authors?
2. What are the characteristic elements or conceptual features inherent within the concept of spirituality?
3. What function or purpose does spirituality serve?
4. What factors enhance and/or retard spiritual development?
5. Is there a proposed relationship between spirituality and health? If so, what is the proposed relationship?
6. What relationships have been discovered between dimensions of spirituality and other related phenomena, such as hope, religion, and presence?
7. What theoretical perspectives and research methods have been used to understand the human spiritual dimension?
8. What is the conceptual context in which spirituality has been investigated?

Overview of the Thesis

Chapter I has served as an introduction to the research problem, wherein the underlying assumptions of holism as a disciplinary tenet, the significance of metaphysics to nursing, and the need for conceptual clarification have been presented.

In Chapter II, the research design is outlined and the concept development methods and hermeneutic analytic procedures which were employed are described. In Chapter III, selected conceptual contexts are presented as a means of emphasizing the cultural, temporal, social, and developmental influences on the evolution of the concept of human spirituality. Chapter IV includes a discussion of cross-conceptual themes and presents a beginning model of the conceptual nature of spirituality, in addition to proposing a definition based on the synthesis of the characteristics and themes discovered.

Summary

I have proposed that human spirituality is a forgotten dimension of human nature which has tremendous potential for health and healing and which is, therefore, of concern to the nursing profession. Rationale to support the need for this study and the importance of conceptualizations of spirituality to professional nursing has also been presented, along with selected supporting background information.

Chapter II

METHOD

In this chapter, the rationale underlying the choice of research paradigm, the hermeneutic approach, concept development techniques, and analytic and interpretive methods are discussed. Given that the research question deals with "understanding" the conceptual nature of human spirituality, from the expository writings of authors across a variety of disciplines, the choice of a method based on naturalistic inquiry was deemed most appropriate.

Theoretical Perspective: Concept Development and Hermeneutics

The question *"What is spirituality?"* is essentially conceptual in nature; therefore, concept development, including concept analysis, synthesis, and reconceptualization, was used to answer the research questions. Conceptual clarification of terminology and meaning surrounding the spiritual dimension, a primarily linguistic task, was used to examine the apparent ambiguities and inconsistencies inherent in much of the theoretical literature of nursing and several other related human science disciplines. According to Wilson (1963), questions of concept are not concerned with *the* meaning of a word but with *actual and possible* uses of words in varying conceptual contexts; therefore, greater diversity of usages and meanings contributes to understanding conceptual evolution. The linguistic structures and patterns of a culture are socially constructed as a function of a shared cultural history. Since meaning is contextually dependent, Wilson (1963) admonishes against the tendency to assume that there is one "right answer" to be settled upon; he also warns against thinking of abstract or ideal concepts, such as spirituality, as objects rather than mere linguistic symbols which change in accordance with the socially pragmatic concerns of a particular culture or historical period. The abstract nature of the concept "spirituality", the theoretical and linguistic ambiguities concerning its usage, and its historical evolution, combine to produce a complete phenomenon which requires a significant level of understanding before it can be described, explicated, or measured. Consequently, the use of hermeneutics, an interpretive

science, was appropriate for the determination of meaning in this study.

A naturalistic approach, based on hermeneutic analysis as outlined by Ricoeur (1981), was used to theoretically examine, analyze, synthesize, and reconceptualize human spirituality from a purposive sample of theoretical, research, and expert opinion literature within the disciplines of Nursing, Psychology, Sociology, Theology, Anthropology, and Philosophy. Popular literature, Mythology, and Poetry were included since they provide a written expression of the authors' attempts to describe personal and/or noumenal aspects of existence or experience and may act as heuristic devices in the discovery of valuable insights which might otherwise be overlooked.

The research process also included an historical analysis of the topic to illustrate the evolution of conceptual usage (within selected determinate contexts), recommendations for further theory development and research, and proposes a beginning model and propositional statements regarding the nature of the concept of spirituality. These steps followed the suggestions for concept development and integrative literature reviews advocated by Walker and Avant (1988), Broome (1993), Cooper (1982), and Morse (1995).

Since the choice of method depends largely upon the nature of the research question and can influence study design and outcome interpretations, philosophical foundations and assumptions must be known by the researcher so that epistemological or theoretical implications regarding methodology are clearly understood (Rodgers, 1993; van Manen, 1990). Hermeneutics, or the science of interpretation, developed as a reaction against the claims of positivism that empirical science alone could establish the bounds of genuine knowledge (Reeder, 1988); it is a method well-suited to naturalistic investigation and shares its underlying philosophical assumptions. Historically, positivism has attempted to provide explanations in the realm of natural science (an epistemological position), while the aim of the human sciences has been to understand human experience as a way of being (an ontological position). However, more contemporary perspectives regarding textual hermeneutics have progressed beyond the

Dilthean dichotomy which opposed explanation (*erklaren*), as belonging to the natural sciences, and understanding (*verstehen*), as belonging to the human sciences, and attempt instead a syncresis of the underlying scientific and philosophic methods (Ray, 1994; Reeder, 1988; Ricoeur, 1981).

The term "hermeneutics" is derived from the name of the Greek herald and messenger of the gods, Hermes. Hermes, also frequently associated with the Egyptian scribe-god, Thoth, was considered the "patron of all forms of communication" (Stoneman, 1991, p. 93). The etymological origin of the term is the Greek *"herneneutikos"* which suggests the process of bringing to clarity, or understanding, that which was previously unintelligible, or alien. Although hermeneutics was initially developed for biblical exegesis, it later was expanded to include interpretation of secular texts; it promotes the interpretation of linguistic symbols, a representative form of cultural and social communication, as a means of "understanding", rather than "explaining" phenomena (Fjelland & Gjengedal, 1994). The goal of hermeneutics is the disclosure and understanding of common, quotidian events so that meaning is revealed and context is preserved while yet bounded by shared cultural and linguistic patterns (Leonard, 1994). According to Altheide and Johnson (1994), "contextual, taken-for-granted, tacit knowledge plays a constitutive role in providing meaning" (p. 492); therefore, implicitly understood knowledge must be brought to conscious awareness prior to explanatory attempts. Textual hermeneutics, then, is a revelatory process of disclosing the inherent messages of written discourse so that awareness and understanding of the author's projected, or representative, "world" is increased (Reeder, 1988; Ricoeur, 1981). In other words, hermeneutics is concerned with human "be-ingness", or ontological meaning, particularly as it is expressed in behaviour and/or language. It is the written language, or texts, which provided that portion of the material culture of the Western world which was of primary interest to this research project. The textual data base for analysis in this study was comprised of primarily theoretical literature regarding the conceptual nature of human spirituality.

The following is a brief description of textual hermeneutics, as understood by this writer, and is based on the writings of Paul Ricoeur (1981). Hermeneutic analysis, as advocated by Ricoeur (1981), requires acceptance of written texts as the basis for reflexive discourse and interpretation. The polysemic nature of words means that they contain numerous intrinsic meanings, based on socially evolved and cultural usage, which acquire specificity only when used in a determinate context; consequently, attention to conceptual context is essential to both the production and/or reception of a relatively univocal discourse. Just as words acquire meaning as a function of context, so too are texts open to a multiplicity of potential meanings (textual polysemy) which also require context to achieve specificity. As Ricoeur (1981) asserts, "Sensitivity to context is the necessary complement and ineluctable counterpart of polysemy" (p. 44).

A text is discourse permanently fixed in writing, which renders it autonomous; employed in this manner, the text reflects a paradigm of distanciation which permits written discourse to be considered and interpreted by the reader without recourse to the intentionality of the writer. The text becomes the written representation of a projected world which will be interpreted uniquely according to the sociocultural and temporal situation of the particular reader. Since the text is also polysemic in nature, it remains open to successive readings which could conceivably alter subsequent interpretations. It is a process devoid of permanent closure, always open to new interpretation. As Ricoeur (1981) states, "The most fundamental condition of the hermeneutical circle lies in the structure of pre-understanding which relates all explication to the understanding which precedes and supports it" (p. 108). Therefore, the interpretive process will be influenced by these "forestructures" which form the "hermeneutic horizon" of the individual. Following the first, or naive, reading for surface meaning, a critical, reflective process, which examines the linguistic structure of the text and its context, is employed to deliberately evaluate and clarify potential sources of misunderstanding; consequently, the interpretive process assumes an added depth. The hermeneutic process culminates in an act of appropriation wherein the textual message which was

previously alien is assimilated as understanding, resulting in the expansion of the reader's hermeneutic horizon. According to Ricoeur (1981), "It is not a question of imposing upon the text our finite capacity of understanding, but of exposing ourselves to the text and receiving from it an enlarged self" (p. 143); it is the "actualisation of meaning as addressed to someone" (p. 185). Only once understanding, or appropriation, has occurred can attempts be made at explication since it is the dialectic formed between understanding and explanation (the hermeneutic circle) which will lead to conceptual clarification.

Procedures for the study were primarily related to thoughtful reflection on, and questioning of, the data, for, according to Hodder (1994):

> The methods of interpretation of material culture center on the simultaneous hermeneutical procedures of context definition, the construction of patterned similarities and differences, and the use of relevant social and material culture theory. (p. 401)

Therefore, a knowledge of the conceptual context, relative to the cultural and temporal conditions of history, formed an essential component of the research. Additionally, the literature was examined for underlying assumptions concerning conceptual usage; this is considered requisite knowledge in all instances of foundational inquiry (Manchester, 1993). These methods helped to identify the various real and potential meanings and dimensions of spirituality and led to the development of inferential relationships which are discussed in the following chapters.

Sampling of the Literature

A purposive sample of accessible literature within the disciplines of Nursing, Psychology, Sociology, Theology, and Philosophy, along with Popular Literature, Mythology, and Poetry comprised the data base for the study. It included theoretical, descriptive, research, and expert opinion literature. Although a broad variety of sources was essential to identify conceptual dimensions, the abundance of available literature, combined with financial and temporal constraints, required the imposition of certain limitations on data collection; consequently, a decision was made to limit data collection

to examples of Western cultural and philosophical thought. Admission criteria were initially based on substantive characteristics (key words) which were already linked to the topic or those that became apparent from the data. Limitation of publications to specific years was unnecessary since historical evolution of the concept contributes to current social usage, and the multiplicity of diverse meanings enhances understanding of the qualitative aspects of the concept and facilitates identification of its elemental nature. Keywords which were employed in the initial phase of the search process included:

Spirituality	*Spiritual healing*	*Spiritual perspective*
Spiritual	*Spiritual dimension*	*Spiritual presence*
Spirit	*Spiritual need*	*Transcendence*
Soul	*Spiritual well-being*	*Life force*
Presence	*Hope*	*Religion*

Initially, all examples of literature were considered, however, further sampling was directed by the analytic process as the conceptual structure began to emerge from the literature (Morse, 1989). Several related terms, including *Empathy, Meaning, Suffering, Alienation, and Faith,* were additionally identified as relevant keywords during the processes of retrieval and analysis as their importance became apparent in the literature.

Data Collection and Retrieval

Since literary texts provided the data for the study, documentation of the search and information extraction (retrieval) processes was essential to demonstrate the study's integrity and credibility (Ganong). Decisions regarding admissibility of texts, scope, cost, and time restrictions, were recorded in a journal, as suggested by Broome (1993). This process was used to demonstrate ostensive gaps in the literature or overreliance on particular classes of written discourse which could weaken the validity, or credibility, of the study. Data collection consisted of using a number of different methods outlined by Cooper (1982) and included:

1. *Computerized search*: Using the keywords identified, a computer search of abstracting services and citation indexes was undertaken in the disciplines noted. This included the Cumulative Index of Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL),

Anthropological abstracts, Psyche Abstracts, and the on-line catalogues of the University of Alberta and Red Deer College.

2. *Invisible college*: This method involved informal communication and sharing of work, ideas, and articles (published and unpublished) amongst colleagues and researchers working on similar problems.

3. *Ancestry approach*: Using this method, citations were tracked from study to study to demonstrate related thinking, branching of ideas, and evolution of conceptual thinking.

4. *Descendency method*: References, citations, and bibliographies from recent books and articles pertinent to the topic were screened for relevance.

5. *Browsing*: The process of browsing through the library led to numerous serendipitous discoveries of relevant literature which proved to be invaluable.

Each article was carefully annotated to concisely summarize and document the essential elements of the content and context (Broome, 1993). A chart system was used to facilitate chronological organization of information retrieved within each selected conceptual context category. Memos identifying important implications were noted on the information extraction form which was developed as part of the annotation process, or were discussed separately in a personal journal. Annotation of articles included the following information:

Author:

Year of publication:

Title of article and/or book:

Discipline of origin:

Classification (theoretical, descriptive, research):

Search keyword:

Important verbatim quotes:

Theoretical memos:

The research questions earlier proposed were used as a framework to guide the systematic extraction of relevant information from each article. The theoretical memo

sections actually ended up being a form of note taking and were probably too detailed; consequently, they required streamlining, an additional step, and the themes and connections were frequently made in the personal journal.

Data Analysis

Conceptual analysis and synthesis, using hermeneutic techniques, permitted systematic examination of the body of retrieved literature through a comparison of similarities and dissimilarities in conceptual usage, identification of ambiguities, consideration of conceptual contexts, and examination of underlying assumptions. Memoing was crucial for the demonstration of connections between important ideas, the development of evolving theory, and the documentation concerning methodological and sampling decisions. This process was essential for establishment of an audit trail since "How a researcher accounts for his or her approach to certain aspects of research, including the routine sources of problems, is key for evaluating the work substantively and methodologically" (Altheide & Johnson, 1994, p. 490). Additionally, since the epistemological origins of hermeneutics are grounded in philosophy, philosophical methods of investigation, including argumentation by analysis, interpretation, and logical stricture (Edgerton, 1988) were appropriate methods of analysis for this study.

Data collection, retrieval, coding, analysis, and interpretation of the concept occurred concurrently as a cyclical process which was directed by, and dependent upon, the emerging themes and questions. As coding of data led to the application of taxonomic labels, it was necessary to continually return to the literature for verification, clarification, and expansion of ideas. Codes were continually examined for relationships and clusters of meaning which might provide evidence of hierarchical and collateral structural organization during the process of conceptual analysis and synthesis, as suggested by Walker and Avant (1988). Characteristic attributes, antecedents and consequences of human spirituality were identified through the aforenoted methods; synthesis occurred through a "sifting" process which eliminated non-essential elements and resulted in the aggregation of recurrent patterns (Morse,

1994). Preliminary data analysis determined the subsequent direction of data information retrieval as gaps became apparent. As themes began to emerge, a beginning model was developed to illustrate the relationships between the various dimensions of human spirituality.

Attention to textual structure and context formed the basis of interpretation as the hermeneutic circle was initiated between the researcher's understanding and the polysemy of the text (Ricoeur, 1981). The processes outlined formed the basis of pattern recognition and acquisition which led to creative insights and development of a beginning conceptual model (May, 1994).

Reliability and validity

Qualitative research has often been disparaged on the grounds that it lacks the scientific rigor, and hence the credibility, of the quantitative paradigm. According to Sandelowski (1986), the criticism of qualitative methods rests on its purported failure to explicate its methods of achieving reliability, validity, and objectivity, the three criteria which underpin the logic and rigor of the scientific paradigm. These ideological characteristics, however, are demonstrably subsumed by naturalistic methods of inquiry and are inherent aspects of trustworthiness and methodological rigor. Trustworthiness is the degree of confidence which can be placed in the research findings, or the extent to which results derive from the data and contexts of inquiry and are free from investigator bias or influence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Methodological rigor concerns the pursuit of high quality data and emphasizes strict adherence to procedures which reduce error. Guba (1981) has described four aspects of trustworthiness which, when taken together, encompass the reliability, validity, and objectivity concerns required by conscientious scientists; these aspects include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Validity, or credibility, in qualitative research is concerned with "how good an answer a study yields" (Field & Morse, 1985, p. 116); it is concerned with confirming the truth value and understanding of a particular phenomenon (Guba, 1981; Leininger,

1985). Methodological rigor in this sense was directed towards increasing the quality of data collection and analysis procedures (Patton, 1990); one procedure which was employed to maintain rigor in this study was the use of structured questions as a framework to guide the systematic extraction of information and annotation of articles from the literature. Since purposive sampling is a feature of qualitative research, comprehensive notations of sampling and methodological process decisions, as well as contextual documentation, were used to enhance validity. As analysis procedures suggested potential categories and theory linkages, careful monitoring and awareness were engaged in to try to avoid the 'holistic fallacy', described by Sandelowski (1986), wherein data are represented as more congruent and patterned than they actually are. Alternative explanations were "tested" against to data to look for corroborating evidence (also known as structural corroboration, or coherence) which would increase confidence in the final outcomes by eliminating internal conflicts and contradictions (Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Hagemaster, 1992; Omery, 1988, 1988; Patton, 1990). This "testing" step, or comparison, satisfies the criterion of objectivity, or confirmability, which is concerned with maintenance of a neutral stance and elimination of error (Guba, 1981).

According to Ricoeur (1981), "validation is an argumentative discipline" whereby one interpretation is shown to be more probable than another; "it is a logic of uncertainty and of qualitative probability" (p. 212). Therefore, it was important that the results of analysis and interpretation be validated by thesis committee members as alternative interpretations and model developments were considered. To ensure referential adequacy, numerous documents were archived without analytic notes and impressions so that other investigators or peers could evaluate the adequacy of interpretations and scope of literature. Attention to these concerns enhance the overall validity of the study.

According to Leininger (1985), reliability in the naturalistic paradigm focuses on "identifying and documenting recurrent, accurate, and consistent (homogeneous) or inconsistent (heterogeneous) features, as patterns, themes, values, world views,

experiences, and other phenomena confirmed in similar or different contexts" (p. 68). Constant comparison of similar and dissimilar conceptual usages and contextual circumstances, as outlined by Guba (1981), were used to facilitate pattern recognition and acquisition (May, 1994). Reliability, or dependability (Guba & Lincoln, 1981), were determined by the logical congruence, or internal consistency, of theoretical relationships and the ability of an independent investigator to follow the logical progression of research activities and decisions (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Hagemaster, 1992; Sandelowski, 1986). To this end, analytical and methodological decisions and contextual information were documented so that an audit trail was established and process decisions as well as insights and evolution of ideas could be tracked.

Qualitative studies are not meant to be replicable (generalizable) in the traditional sense; rather, they are considered unique and particular knowledge. Rather than focus on replication, transferability becomes the criterion of external validity; researchers may repeat the study under similar circumstances and obtain somewhat different, yet still valid, results; what matters is only that the results are not contradictory.

Researcher credibility is also subject to error and the introduction of bias. Lipson (1991) states that a researcher's background, attitudes, education, professional training, emotions, feelings, and personality can present significant challenges during data collection and analysis; consequently, high quality data collection requires an astute, non-judgmental, and neutral observation status. Since the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection for this study, the quality and outcomes of the study depended primarily upon researcher ability (Field & Morse, 1985). According to May (1991), "one of the most consistent challenges to the credibility of qualitative research is the issue of systematic bias through investigator control of data collection and analysis" (p. 197); therefore, issues of bias and researcher credibility were critical.

Qualitative researchers often use rigorous "bracketing" techniques to diminish the potential bias which may occur as a consequence of using self as the primary means of data collection and analysis. The process of bracketing involves stringent examination

of the researcher's prejudgments, values, attitudes, and beliefs. It attempts to remove the influence of self by raising self-awareness, which is "required to limit the interpreter's projection of his/her world onto the text" (Benner, 1994, p. xvii), through journalling, introspection, and reflective contemplation of reactions, emotions, and cultural biases. Denzin (cited in Patton, 1990) states that all investigators bring preconceptions to their research and, therefore, "scholars must state beforehand their prior interpretations of the phenomenon being investigated. Unless these meanings and values are clarified, their effects on subsequent interpretations remain clouded and often misunderstood" (p. 476). However, in hermeneutic inquiry, the use of bracketing remains a contentious issue since the prejudgments and preconceptions, or forestructures, form the hermeneutic horizon of the investigator; it is the opening of oneself to the "newness" presented within a text that permits a "fusion of horizons" and leads to increased understanding (Gadamer, cited in Reeder, 1988, p. 213).

The predominant source of researcher bias at the outset of this investigation was related to a personal belief in the existence of spirituality as an essential dimension of human nature which could potentially be experienced by all members of the human race and which possessed a transcendent quality of some form. This underlying belief influenced the research question, choice of method, and initial selections of relevant literature. The contextual dependence of meaning suggests that one's perceptions of reality are influenced by situational and social interactions; as such, investigations conducted by social scientists, as members of the human race, cannot ensure absolute neutrality of the research process. Meanings and insights derived are partially determined by the interaction of the research context and the current, and always changing, hermeneutic horizon of the researcher. The themes that emerge, and those that remain hidden, are a function of this interaction; these emerging insights, or understandings, would presumably be quite different in another time period or context. Consequently, increasing self-awareness will alert the researcher to potential sources of bias, or influence, which must be examined since they could alter the ascription of

meaning. Therefore, personal journals and theoretical memos were maintained so that potential sources of bias could be considered and evaluated to weigh their possible consequences throughout the research process.

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were not a major consideration in this study since no human subjects were used; data were extracted exclusively from published and unpublished sources of literary discourse. Academic honesty relating to the acknowledgement of ideas from all sources was the primary ethical consideration.

Chapter III

SELECTED CONCEPTUAL CONTEXTS

Since hermeneutic inquiry, using Ricoeur's method of textual interpretation, involves aspects of linguistic analysis within particular conceptual contexts, concept development techniques will be employed simultaneously with contextual analysis in a variety of selected contexts so that the influence of context on conceptual understanding can be evaluated. Contexts in which spirituality will be discussed include: Mythological and Poetic Literature; Historical; Aboriginal; Developmental Stages; Contemporary Theoretical; and Illness contexts.

In order to establish a point of departure and set some initial boundaries for data collection, a variety of dictionary definitions were reviewed prior to the examination of extant knowledge surrounding the phenomenon of spirituality within each of the selected contextual areas. Cognates of spirituality, such as spirit, spiritual, and spiritual dimension were included since they are frequently interchanged in the literature.

Dictionary Definitions

Random House College Dictionary (1980) describes spirituality as the "quality of being spiritual" and provides several meanings of spiritual, and spirit, including: "consisting of spirit; seat of the moral or religious nature; conscious thoughts and emotions; the incorporeal part of man; the mind or soul; the seat of feelings or sympathies". Webster (1986) adds: "relating to the moral feelings or states of the soul as distinguished from the external actions; the breath of life; the animating or vital principle giving life to physical organisms".

The Dictionary of Philosophy (Runes, 1984) defines spirit as "breath, life, soul, mind" and as the "animating and energizing principle of the Cosmos", "a disembodied or incorporeal conscious being", and "the supersensuous, ideal order of being or realm of mind: the intellectual, rational, noetic, aesthetic, moral, holy, divine" (p. 316). Soul, in this same dictionary, is described as "the vital principle; the formal cause, essence, or entelechy (actuality as opposed to potentiality) of a natural organic body" (p.

312). Spirit and soul are often used synonymously in the literature, particularly in accordance with certain historical periods, and, as such, are interchanged in this thesis during discussions of spirituality in these epochs.

A number of synonyms of spirituality were also identified and include: sacred, psychic, godly, supernatural, immaterial, animation, passion, life force, liveliness, fortitude, essence, psyche, inner nature, mood (Roget, 1992), and life, mind, consciousness, essence, intention, significance, energy, attitude (Urdang, 1980).

Three apparently unrelated usages which were found include, "the true or basic meaning or intent of a statement, document, etc.; a vigorous sense of membership in a group; pertaining to something that works by burning alcohol". Inclusion of these unusual examples emphasizes the importance of context as a determinant of meaning. It is apparent from these definitions and synonyms that spirit, soul, mind, psyche, and life are not well differentiated and may lead to ambiguous interpretations in the literature, particularly in the absence of contextual interpretation. At this point, it is appropriate to begin a review of human spirituality within the selected conceptual contexts indicated previously.

The images of myth are reflections of the spiritual potentialities of every one of us. Through contemplating these, we evoke their powers in our lives.

Joseph Campbell

The Context of Mythological and Poetic Literature

The mythological and poetic literature of a culture provides a rich source of descriptive information regarding its underlying social, moral, and religious systems. Each literary category serves a unique function in the preservation of the values and beliefs of a culture and, as such, will provide the conceptual context for the discussion of spirituality which follows. Some effort has been made to provide the reader with sufficient detail within selected cultural mythologies to evaluate the degree of analytic success in evaluating spirituality within these contexts. Although some of the descriptions may appear to be redundant, they lay the foundation for understanding the historical evolution and intervening events which have altered the perceptions and conceptualizations of this phenomenon. A thorough understanding of this subject area will increase theoretical sensitivity to changes surrounding contemporary conceptual usage and sets the stage for many of the following discussions.

Mythology

Although the origin of most cultural mythologies remain unknown, examples are found in virtually all known cultures, past and present. Behavioural patterns, material art, and literary legacies provide evidence of culturally accepted myths. Ancient Egyptians buried their dead with special belongings, food, and tools for their journey to the next life. A 3rd century Greco-Roman sarcophagus, described by Day (1984), depicts Minerva inserting souls, in the form of butterflies, into men as they were being created by Prometheus. Animal ceremonialism, or ritual atonement, to animal spirits who have been killed, has been practised for centuries. The enduring quality of cultural mythology is a testament to its significance; therefore, it appears to be an indispensable part of human social structure. Before proceeding, it is essential to understand the

nature, function, and common characteristics of mythological forms.

The term "myth", properly used, refers to a sacred story which embodies the central beliefs and normative values of a religion and/or culture; it represents an underlying worldview of a cultural interpretation of history and reality which encompasses all of time and space (Campbell, 1970; Clark, 1960; Day, 1984; Moss & Stott, 1986). A cultural mythology is a shared vision whereby people relate to their natural and supernatural environments; it frequently begins with the creation of the world by a supernatural being or beings and typically ends with its destruction and an apocalyptic description of a new and better existence which is to follow (Campbell, 1970, 1988; Day, 1984; Moss & Stott, 1986). According to noted French anthropologist Levi-Strauss (cited in Moss & Stott, 1986):

> As a sacred world history, a mythology explains the creation of the world by a divine power, the relationships between the supernatural beings and between them and human beings, the nature of the world as it exists, the reasons for the existence of sin, disease, and death, and often, the destruction of the world. (p. 252)

There are certain elements that are present in all cultural mythologies which have been identified by Day (1984) and which are relevant to the following accounts:

1. The majority of people within the specific culture hold the mythology to be true.
2. The events postulated cannot be proven scientifically.
3. It is laden with symbolism which represents psychic and spiritual reality, though not external reality.
4. It is sacred.
5. It is narrative.
6. The setting usually displays a timeless quality, making it equally valid in the present.
7. Participants include respected supernatural powers.
8. The mythology provides a valuable source of knowledge and guidance.
9. The myth is believed with profound fervour.

The widely accepted and zealously adhered to cultural "truths" that are embedded in mythological heritages display a timeless quality which ensures their acceptance as valid and relevant to contemporary society.

The implicit messages within myths are evident to listeners and readers alike, despite being embedded in the various linguistic and sociohistorical traditions which are projected by particular cultures. According to Campbell (1989):

> Myth is metaphor...Myths come from where the heart is, and where the experience is, even as the mind may wonder why people believe these things. The myth does not point to a fact; the myth points beyond facts to something that informs facts. (21)

There are several different types of myths, each of which serves a specific and unique function. Inherent in many of them are properties which directly refer to the spiritual dimension of human nature. *Etiological* myths, including cosmogenic myths, explain the origins, causes and reasons for major occurrences. They generally explain creation, the origin or cause of sin, disease, and death, and reasons for their necessary existence; they are concerned with the deeper, universal concerns of human nature (Campbell, 1970; Day, 1984; Moss & Stott, 1986). *Soteriological* myths have salvational or deliverance themes; they explain how humans arrived in their present situation and often depict divine guidance and rescue - outcomes may be physical, material, or spiritual (Day, 1984). *Existential* myths provide exemplars of the moral and psychological virtues most desired by a culture, as personified by the gods in their interactions with each other and with humankind. *Prophetic* myths present external visions of the future in which there will be an end to human misery; they contain much symbology and are fervently believed (Day, 1984). *Eschatological* myths go beyond prophetic myths and express visions of death, the ultimate end of humankind, and an afterlife existence; they carry an apocalyptic message (Day, 1984); Although there are other types of myth, such as *heroic* myths, *ritual* myths, and *prestige* myths, they are not germane to this discussion and are not included.

According to Campbell (1970), all of these types of traditional myths primarily serve four basic functions. Firstly, they demonstrate an attempted "reconciliation of consciousness with the preconditions of its own existence", a *mystical*, or *metaphysical* function (p. 138). This is a redemptive function which permits freedom from guilt following recognition and acknowledgement of the brutal and inescapable nature of human existence (such as the killing of other life to sustain human life). Secondly, myths serve to present a teleological image of the universe and the natural world as a

unified harmony, a *cosmological* function. The third function of myths is the validation and assurance of a "specific social order, authorizing its moral code as a construct beyond criticism or human emendation" (p. 140); this fulfills a *sociological* function. Finally, myths serve to shape the ideals of individuals to meet the standards and expectations of the various social groups to which they belong, a *psychological* function. When these functions are considered together, it becomes apparent that mythology serves as an essential, integrating, and potentially life-altering source of power. Through myth, individuals learn their cultural history, their place in the universe, patterns for social relationships, and normative values; through them, an individual's spiritual potential may become apparent, appropriated, and developed. Myths, then, become the models for life (Campbell, 1988).

Existential and metaphysical matters which are frequently acknowledged to be of concern in contemporary society include the origins, meaning, and purpose in life, a search for explanations of thaumatological and numinous experiences, the meaning of suffering and sin, and questions of an eschatological nature. Many of these concerns are reflected in various mythological traditions and are evident in the following accounts. Spirituality, a central value and recognized phenomenon in all cultures, must, therefore, be a prominent allegorical feature within all traditional mythological structures and will be demonstrated through accounts taken from several diverse cultures. The temporal and space constraints of this project required the following discussions to be focused primarily on a variety of creation, or cosmogenic, myths; however, excellent examples of eschatological, prophetic, and soteriological myths were abundant throughout the literature.

Creation myths from around the world tend to originate from one of six basic themes identified by van Over (cited in Moss & Stott, 1986); several of these will be apparent in the following synoptic versions of myths:

1) The idea of a primeval abyss - space, water, or nothingness (Greek, Roman, Norse, and some Indian myths).
2) A creator god or gods which have existed eternally (Biblical, and some Indian myths).

3) The god(s) brood over the water or abyss (Biblical, and some Indian myths).
4) A theme of an embryo or cosmic egg.
5) Life created through sound or a sacred word (Biblical).
6) Creation of life from the corpse or body parts of a primeval god (some Indian and Inuit myths).

A brief synopsis of each creation myth will be presented before each critique to ensure readers a sufficient understanding of pertinent detail in this less familiar body of literature. Although a number of themes pertaining to spirituality became apparent during an examination of the mythological literature, myths were not grouped according to theme since themes were difficult to abstract from their contexts. Common themes included: a relationship with deity (or deities); connections to other living creatures; harmony with the natural environment; immanence; transcendence; rules for conduct; existential concerns; and a developmental process. Numerous themes appeared in each myth, but not all themes were evident in every myth.

Judeo-Christian tradition

In the Biblical account of creation, God (eternal and always existent) created man (Genesis 1:27 - refers to man as male and female) and "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7); thus man was "inspirited" by God. Adam and Eve were given dominion over all of the other creatures (Genesis 1:28) and thus placed in a favoured position between the beasts and the angels. They lived in a personal relationship with God and in harmony with nature and with each other until, desiring to "be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5), they wilfully disobeyed God and were ejected from Eden, and their toil- and pain-free idyllic existence, and set on a difficult linear journey filled with sorrow and travail, and culminating in death.

The creation story of the Judeo-Christian tradition provides elements of etiological, or cosmogenic, soteriological, and prophetic myths and fulfills the metaphysical, cosmological, sociological, and psychological functions required of traditional mythology. The spiritual themes which emerge from this account are unmistakable; humans have a personal relationship to God, a strong connection with

each other, and a harmonious relationship with their environment. Obedience to the law of God produces harmony. The original "inspiriting" process lays the foundation for the doctrine of divine immanence wherein the presence of God resides within each individual. The introduction of sin, and its subsequent punishment, serves to symbolically justify the existence of illness, suffering, discord, and death, thereby attributing meaning and purpose to these occurrences. It also provides an explanation for the human need to establish, or re-establish, a relationship to the Creator and the created universe, and thereby provides a foundation for the doctrine of transcendence and the sacredness of life.

Greek tradition

The Greek account of creation is remarkably similar in its themes, although it differs significantly in some aspects. This abridged narrative is a synoptic summary of five accounts related by Baldwin (unknown), Bulfinch (1979), Green (1958), and Moss and Stott (1986), and Stoneman (1991). The names in parentheses are the Roman equivalents of the god(desses) as they appear in these accounts. In the beginning only Chaos, a confused and shapeless mass, existed. From out of Chaos came Gaea (the Earth) and Uranus (the Sky) and these two gave rise to a race of Titans (immortal giants) and their sister-wives. After two generations, one of the Titans, Zeus (Jupiter), assumed power and established a kingdom on Mount Olympus which he divided and ruled over with his brothers, Poseidon and Hades.

Two Titan brothers, Prometheus and Epimetheus, were made responsible to create man (women were not created at this time) and provide them, and all the animals, with the abilities and resources necessary for their existence and preservation. Prometheus wished to provide the mortals with the gift of fire so they could rule over the animals and make tools; however, Zeus (Jupiter) refused their request because he thought fire would make the mortals too much like the gods. Against Zeus's directive, Prometheus stole fire from heaven and gave it to man. Although Prometheus felt he acted with impunity, Zeus bided his time while contemplating the punishment he would

impose on Prometheus. Zeus created the archetypical woman, Pandora, who was endowed with physical and psychological gifts from each of the gods on Mount Olympus. She was taken by Hermes (Mercury) to earth, carrying a box of "treasures" which she was admonished never to open, and presented as a gift to Epimetheus. Prometheus warned his brother to beware of gifts from Zeus because he feared retribution and destruction of his mortal creatures as a result of his disobedience. Pandora, becoming curious about the box's contents, one day opened the box, which actually contained all of the evils and misfortunes of the world, and allowed all but one small item to escape to plague humankind. Foreknowledge (aptly named, for Prometheus means foreknowledge) remained imprisoned so that whatever misfortune befell humankind, there would always be *hope* it could be overcome. Prometheus was then seized by Zeus and chained on Mount Caucasus where he was to be condemned to a life of eternal suffering and torture by having a vulture tear at his liver by day and being allowed to heal each night so that he was without relief. (He was eventually rescued by Hercules).

There are many spiritual aspects of this account which parallel the themes of the Judeo-Christian creation story. Relationship between humans and the gods who created and cared for them were common and humans shared a harmonious coexistence with nature. Disobedience to authority results in the introduction of evil and misfortune into the world, which subsequently leads to the perpetual suffering and hardship of humankind. In this case, however, the polytheistic nature of creation, and direct interaction of gods with mortals, precludes theories of immanence and transcendence. One outstanding discordant feature of this account lies in the causation of the consequent punishment; it is the action of a god, and the subsequent reaction of another god, that brings about the punishment and demise of the human utopian existence. Hope for deliverance from tribulation is implied in the Judeo-Christian account but is explicitly referred to in the Greek account. In both cases, disobedience leads to the plight of humanity and precipitates the struggle to survive and the journey towards death.

Not all of the Greek human-god interaction myths are as violent or detrimental to humankind as this myth; many portray these types of relationships as harmonious and beneficial to humans. For example, the story of Cupid and Psyche is an allegorical representation of the joining of love, as represented by Cupid (a god), with the soul, as represented by Psyche (a human); in this myth, Psyche is granted the gift of immortality by the gods because of her great love for Cupid (Moss & Stott, 1986).

Roman tradition

The Romans received much of their science, religion, and social heritage from the Greeks; consequently, the main body of Roman mythology is Greek in origin, with the names substituted with the Roman equivalents. The Romans, however, believed in *lars*, or *lares* (the closest translation is ghosts); these household spirits, or ancestral souls, watched over their descendants. The Romans believed that each person had a personal spirit who gave them life and provided protection (Bulfinch, 1979). Themes of a spiritual nature in Roman mythology are virtually identical to those of the Greeks, except for the additional feature of personal protector spirits, which demonstrates an expansive polytheism.

Norse tradition

According to Norse mythology, creation began when Nifflheim, the North (land of ice and cold), and Muspelheim, the South (land of fire and heat) emerged from the darkness. From these lands was born a giant named Ymir; after three generations of giants, a powerful giant, Odin, was born. He grew up to kill Ymir, whose body provided the materials for the creation of heaven, earth, the oceans, and a home for the gods, also known as the Aesir, to be built. Odin, king of the Norse gods, god of war, and god of wisdom, was a beneficent ruler. In "Odin goes to Mimir's Well", Odin, All-Father, leaves Asgard (land of the Aesir) and travels through Midgard (the world of men), mingling with humans on his way to Jotunheim (land of the giants) to find wisdom to rule his subjects. On his journey he undergoes great physical hardship and sacrifices an eye in his quest to foresee the future and attain foreknowledge of

humankind's sorrows and misfortunes, as well as how they could be borne. Only in this way could Odin obtain sufficient wisdom to fulfill his responsibilities. Unlike Greek and Roman gods, the Aesir were mortal, so the dangers and hardships faced by Odin were very real (Moss & Stott, 1986).

Themes pertaining to spirituality are apparent in the close relationship of human and a beneficent deity; life is created from the remains of the original creator, suggesting immanence. Although there is no evidence of a transcendent relationship, there is evidence of a strong relational connectedness between Odin and his subjects. Themes relating to human interpersonal relationships appear to be absent in this myth. Human misfortune, and the means to bear it, is revealed by Odin through great sacrifice; it is unclear whether human illness and sorrow are the result of a natural occurrence or punishment for some unknown transgression.

Native Indian tradition

There are many variations of the creation theme within Native Indian social groups, which are dependent on the particular tribal culture, geographic region, and linguistic heritage; there are, however, several universal themes which may be abstracted from these diverse narratives. In all recorded accounts of Native Indian creation myths, humans are viewed as *part of* nature; spirits are everywhere and in all creatures (Clark, 1960; Moss & Stott, 1986). The close relationship and interdependence of humans, animals, and nature is a consequence of the spiritual bond which exists between all members of creation. All Native Indian spirits are imbued with powerful supernatural capabilities and are able to appear in either human or animal form.

Moss and Stott (1986) describe four types of creation myths which recur in Native Indian mythology; they include:

1) Creation of the world by an eternal existent All-being.
2) Earth diver stories in which a bird or sea animal dives beneath the all-encompassing waters to secure a clump of clay which becomes land.
3) Emergence accounts in which humans are created from the ground.
4) Cultural hero tales in which a benefactor god travels about creating plants and animals and infusing them with specific characteristics.

In the Blackfoot variation, Napi (Old Man) the all-spirit (who was both he and she), created the world and all life from within himself and was, therefore, within all things and outside of all things. People and animals bred together and lived in love and harmony with each other and with Napi. Death was introduced arbitrarily so that all things (bodies) would return to original nothingness; however, the spirit would be raised as a result of struggling and striving in life, to a continuous immaterial existence (Clark, 1960; Moss & Stott, 1986).

This myth is of the first type described above and contains several elements of spirituality; these include themes of immanence, a personal relationship with a deity or deities, a shared and harmonious connection with other humans and the animals, and transcendence. Strife and striving in life are the means to continued existence in the spirit world after death, implying a linear journey, activity, and a maturational process.

The Huron and Iroquois creation myth is one variation of the earth diver story. In the beginning, when only water covered the earth and water animals existed, a divine woman fell from the heavenly abode of the gods and was rescued by loons and set on the back of a Great turtle. As the water animals tried to retrieve some earth to make a land for her, only a toad was able to reach the depths to retrieve some earth, which grew into land. The woman eventually gave birth to supernatural twins, Good brother and Evil brother, and she died during the birth of her Evil son. Her body then became part of the earth and provided the materials needed for the plants which would sustain the people newly created by the Good brother. The Good brother created and cared for the humans and animals while the Evil brother plotted to destroy them. In a final duel to the death, Good brother almost died, but was revived by his mother's (earth's) spirit to recover and kill his Evil brother (Clark, 1960).

The Cree myth strongly parallels that of the Huron and Iroquois, except that Wisakedjak, a bird spirit and servant of the Creator, was responsible for care of the humans, provision of food, and prevention of quarrelling amongst the people the Creator had made. He disobeyed the Creator and evil and bloodshed became

widespread. Humans, and all but one Otter, Beaver, and Muskrat, were annihilated (by a flood) as punishment for the actions of Wisakedjak. Otter and Beaver made several failed attempts to obtain earth from below the waters to create land, but only Muskrat succeeded, whereupon the earth expanded into an island, and the Creator recreated humans and the animals of today (Clark, 1960).

Both of the preceding myths are classic examples of a cosmogenic myth of the second type. They contain themes of a relationship between humans and a creator deity, and a spiritual connection with the earth, animals, and environment. Both contain references to a predominant Creator spirit, in addition to elements of polytheism and theriomorphism.

The Chippewyan myth is a radical departure from the aforementioned narratives. Nanabozho was born of a spirit father and a mortal mother; he possessed powers of transformation and was able to converse with all manner of creation. Nanabozho did not create humans until after the great flood when he had recreated the earth and everything on it. He was a beneficent god who protected his people and taught them all they needed to know to survive; he brought the humans fire and showed them herbs to use for healing. He brought humankind gifts from the spirits to aid in healing (a sacred drum), extend life (a sacred rattle), bring peace (tobacco), and provide companionship (a dog). Nanabozho provided the shamans with all the rules and rites of religion which he had obtained from the spirits. There is also a passing reference to a battle with the Evil one in this account (Clark, 1960).

This type four etiological and soteriological myth exemplifies a transcendent relationship between humans and a beneficent creator, an intimate connection to nature, and rules of ethical conduct. Ethnologist Hewitt (cited in Clark, 1960) regarded the god Nanabozho to be "the impersonation of life, the active quickening power of life" (p. 6).

Finally, the creation myth of the Haida, and other Pacific coast tribes, centres on the Raven, spirit servant of the god Sha-lana who ruled in a kingdom of clouds since before the world was formed. The Raven angered Sha-lana and was ejected from the

kingdom; he then created the land but soon became lonely and desirous of companionship. The Raven eventually created two people (both women) from heaps of clam shells and they coexisted peacefully together for a period. After some time, the Raven heard them grumbling and realized they were unhappy both being female, so he subsequently changed one of the women into a man. These two humans became the first ancestors of the Haida people (Clark, 1960).

This account combines the first and third types of cosmogenic myth and describes a companion relationship between the creator spirit and the human creatures. The differences between the Iroquois, Huron, Cree, and Blackfoot myths over against those of the Chippewa and Haida may be, at least to some degree, accounted for by their linguistic heritages. The former tribes all belong to the Innu nation and form the Algonquian speakers of the Eastern subarctic (Bone, 1992). The latter belong to the Dene nation and are comprised of Athapaskan speaking tribes (Bone, 1992). The geographic and linguistic origins of these groups would account for the similarities within, and the differences between, the myths since they would be influenced by those tribes with similar language living in close proximity.

A comparison of Native Indian creation myths demonstrates several similarities in the nature of spirituality and the origin of spiritual beliefs. Major themes evident in these narratives include descriptions of a personal transcendent relationship with a deity (or deities) and helper spirits, in addition to connections to all creatures and nature. Transcendence is implied in hierarchical relationships with the gods and in descriptions of healing and drumming which often led to an ecstatic experience, and finally, immanence is inherent in the Blackfoot, Huron, and Iroquois traditions. Polytheism and theriomorphism are also prominent features in many of these accounts.

Inuit tradition

The story of Sedna (also known as *Nuliajuk*, *Arnakapfaluk*, or *Takanakapfaluk*), a chief deity of the Inuit, is perhaps one of the most complex and violent myths underlying a cultural identity. It forms the central core of the Inuit belief system and

breaks radically from all of the aforenoted mythologies. Although there are several minor variations from one geographic region to another (primarily due to the oral tradition and nomadic patterns of each group), the central features remain consistent across the north. Once again, the following is a synthesized account of the ancient Inuit creation myth (Brandson, 1994; Damas, 1972; Eliade, 1964; Melzack, 1971; Moss & Stott, 1986; San Souci & San Souci, 1981; Seidelman & Turner, 1993).

Sedna, a beautiful but very proud young woman, angered her father by refusing to marry; in desperation, he gave her as wife to a dog. Some of Sedna's children were born as dogs and others in human form - her offspring became the ancestors of white people and Chippewa Indians. Finally, she is wooed away to an island home by a fulmar, or petrel (in some variations, a Raven), in human form, who possessed great spirit power. When she eventually discovered his secret identity, she became desolate and despondent. Her father, hearing from a distance the prayers of her soul, set out in his *umiak* to rescue her. When her husband returned home one day to find her gone, he spotted them fleeing across the water and gave chase. He created such a storm with his spirit power and beating of wings (for he had become very large in size) that Sedna's father became terrified and threw his daughter into the sea in an attempt to appease him. Sedna, however, clung on to the side of the boat; her panicked father swung his oar and chopped off her fingers at the first joint, whereupon her severed digits were transformed into seals. Still Sedna clutched the boat; swinging his oar a second time, he severed the remainder of her fingers, and these were transformed into sea lions and walruses. Her desperate attempts to cling to the *umiak* with her thumbs was thwarted when her father cruelly severed those digits too - these became the whales. Sedna sank into the watery depths and underwent a supernatural metamorphosis to become goddess of the sea and mother of the beasts created from her body. As her living offspring, the sea beasts had souls. Since Sedna knew firsthand the cruelty of humans, she determined that her children, and their spirits, must be respected or she would not permit them to be taken by the hunters who would depend on them for basic needs and continued survival.

Sedna, in conjunction with Sila (god of the air and wind) and Tarqeq (the moon spirit), was considered the major force underlying all of Inuit life and social structure. Since the causation of virtually every aspect of life and behaviour was attributed to the supernatural, and since hunting (survival) depended on the whims of the spirits, all actions and activities were directed towards gaining the favour, or the appeasement, of the spirits. Natural and supernatural worlds were not distinct in Inuit mythology or views of reality; there existed a fundamental unity of material and spiritual life and a profound respect for all living creatures possessed of *inua*, or spirits/souls (Brody, 1987; Seidelman & Turner, 1993).

The Sedna myth is a classic example of an etiological narrative with soteriological overtones. It presents a metaphysical cosmology and provides sociological and psychological functions in the taboos regarding moral and social behaviour. Spirituality is evident in many elements of this narrative, although it may be easily overlooked in this alternative perspective of reality. A totally dependent and fatalistic relationship existed between humans and multiple deities, and there was a profound sense of connection to each other, animals, and the environment. This was a polytheistic society in which there was no differentiation between spirituality and any other aspect of reality.

Although the origins of these mythologies are unknown, they are widespread and have survived via an ongoing oral tradition, prior to much of Western history, which changed and codified their original form. Each presents the unique foundational features upon which a particular cultural worldview is built. Despite historical events such as the Enlightenment, the Renaissance, Colonial and European expansionism, and the Middle Ages, the messages within the myths have endured with their essential elements intact. The historical context will be discussed in detail in a following section.

Mythology continues to be relevant to the development of Western cultures since, without a knowledge and understanding of ancient mythology, much of our heritage and cultural literature cannot be appreciated (Bulfinch, 1979). For example, Byron (cited in

Bulfinch, 1979), in his ode to Bonaparte, refers to "the thief of fire from heaven...the unforgiven--his vulture and his rock" (p. 42) when alluding to Prometheus, and Milton (1961) recounts the fall from grace of humankind in terms of Pandora's release of evil, misfortune, and disease into the world as retribution for the deception and disobedience of Prometheus in stealing fire from Zeus for humankind:

> More lovely, than Pandora, whom the gods
> Endowed with all their gifts; and, O! too like
> In sad event, when, to the unwiser son
> Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared
> Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
> Of him who had stole Jove's authentic fire. (Paradise Lost, Book IV, 714-720)

Much of our literature and poetry make implicit reference to classical Greek and Roman mythology and compares the actions of contemporary mortals to their ancient immortal counterparts. The underlying spiritual values which have been encoded by the Prometheus myth remain relevant today. For example, concern for humankind, an interactive relationship, endurance, unmerited suffering, and strength of will may be considered god-like qualities which stimulate spiritual growth or development; parallels to the Greco-Roman (Prometheus) myth are encountered in Judaic (Job), and Christian (Christ) traditions, and qualities of endurance, strength, and suffering are manifest in the Native Indian and Inuit traditions. Shakespearean literature also abounds with descriptions of relationships between humans and spirits, as personifications of nature, reflective introspection and growth of self-awareness, acknowledgement of a metaphysical realm, references to Greek mythology (Ceres, Juno, and Iris in The Tempest; Hercules and Olympus in Hamlet), and existential concerns, such as morality, good versus evil, death and the possible existence of an afterlife (Hamlet's soliloquy when contemplating suicide). These writings contain all the questions which have plagued, and continue to plague, humanity and which remain objects of contemplation.

Contemporary mythology

Many modern literary myths are being written which follow the form and function of ancient mythology in that they encode values of importance and embed them

in stories dealing with creation, human nature, and an apocalyptic vision of ultimate destiny (Moss & Stott, 1986). An example of a comprehensive, modern literary myth is found in the seven volume Chronicles of Narnia series of children's literature, written by C. S. Lewis (1955-1956). This story deals with spiritual themes of god-mortal interaction, relationships with others, transcendence, and the existential concerns of adversity and eschatology, making them fit with the myths of antiquity. The series ends with an explanation by Aslan, the lion god, to the children, that the dream they had about dying was, in fact, a reality and they were now living in the new eternal kingdom.

A second, and probably more familiar, example is found in George Lucas's popular Star Wars trilogy; instructive themes concerning the nature of human spirituality are multifold within this contemporary myth. Moral values are encoded and are evident in the personified clash between 'good' and 'evil', and social conflict is apparent in the struggle between spiritual, or metaphysical, values and scientific technology. Both of these conflicts are demonstrated through "the force". According to Velasco (1984), the force is "an energy field generated by all living things...few individuals were able to recognize or use its power, and without proper training there was a danger of yielding to the 'dark side' of the Force" (p. 67). However, the ability to tap this metaphysical source could provide great power and healing ability related to the spiritual interconnectedness of all life. It is apparent that both ancient and modern mythologies provide a powerful legacy for understanding contemporary cultural values, including current conceptualizations of spirituality.

Poetic Literature

Poetic literature, both verse and prose, fulfills a similar function to mythology; it also reflects and preserves important cultural values and beliefs. It offers to public scrutiny a variety of intensely personal expressions of phenomenal experience, or existential moments, complete with descriptions of attendant sensory perceptions. Its aesthetic appeal is enhanced by its ability to evoke strong emotional or spiritual responses in its readers.

The majority of selected poetry and prose reviewed ranged from the sixteenth to twentieth centuries, yet many of the themes found were remarkably similar across this period. Six major themes recur throughout this body of literature. The first theme which became apparent describes relationships between humans and God. Hildegard of Bingen, an eleventh century mystic, has been extensively interpreted by Uhlein (1983); her writings present a creation centred, wholistic cosmology wherein interdependent relationships with God, humans, and the environment are described. She writes:

> Now humankind needs a body
> that at all times
> honours and praises God.
> This body is supported in every way
> through the earth.
> Thus the earth glorifies the power
> of God.
> As the creator loves his creation,
> so creation loves the Creator. (p. 51)

Several centuries later, Goethe (1988), in the final lines of Faust, states that "Should a man strive with all his heart, Heaven can foil the devil [and] if love also from on high has helped him through his sorrow..." (p. 259). A contemporary of Goethe, Wordsworth (1983) remarks, "Wisdom and Spirit of the universe! Thou soul that art the eternity of thought, that givest to forms and images a breath and everlasting motion..." (p. 278).

These last two passages are interesting examples of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century literature because the evolutionary changes in philosophical and social ideals, characteristic of this era, are apparent in the prolific offerings of these writers. According to Knoebel (1988), "Goethe epitomized the confused strains of the transition from the neoclassicism of the eighteenth century to the romanticism of the nineteenth" (p. 221). This confusion is personified by Goethe in his dramatic portrayal of Faust. Faust's anguish over the state of humanity, his spiritual uncertainty, and the metaphorical struggle between the personified forces of Good (Angels) and Evil (Mephistopheles) over his immortal soul, combine in an allegorical representation of the

ambivalence regarding human nature which was prevalent in Goethe's social epoch. Wordsworth clearly embraced Romanticism, as is evident in the aforementioned citation. Wordsworth's poetry is rooted in a reality of metaphysics and depicts humanity's spiritual nature and ties to the natural and supernatural worlds.

A final, more recent example from the early twentieth century asserts that "the mind enters itself, and God the mind, [a]nd one is One, free in the tearing wind" (Roethke, 1987, p. 361). Roethke was preoccupied with spirituality, human nature, and self awareness; he suffered serious bouts of depression, but saw in his relationships with God and nature the possibility of transcendence and freedom from the darkness of depression and despair (Lecker, David, & O'Brien, 1987). His work was unusual considering it was written at the height of materialistic and rationalistic prominence.

The second theme noted in this body of literature, with reference to spirituality, was the frequent mention of interrelationships with others. Uhlein (1983) interprets Hildegard of Bingen as saying:

> You are the mighty way in which every
> thing that is in the heavens,
> on the earth, and under the earth,
> is penetrated with connectedness,
> is penetrated with relatedness. (p. 41)

This verse goes beyond simple human to human interrelationships and posits cosmic interconnections.

Milton, in Paradise Lost, declares through Adam,

> ...I feel
> The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
> Bone of my bone thou art, and from they state
> Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe. (Bk IX, 913-916)

In reference to Adam and Eve's intimate bond, Milton (1961), also through Adam, adds:

> The bond of Nature draw me to my own;
> My own in thee, for what thou art is mine.
> Our state cannot be severed; we are one,
> One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself. (Bk IX, 952-959)

Milton's epic poem was written during the late Renaissance period when neoclassicism prevailed; it chronicles the fall of Adam and Eve and is replete with biblical and classical mythological references. Less that a century later, Alexander Pope writes, "Heav'n breathes thro' ev'ry member of the whole...as one common soul" (1951, p. 338). These passages exemplify the theme of connectedness, or relationships, with others. One final selection which not only illustrates a connection to others, but also encompasses the third theme, connections to nature or the natural environment, is found in the words of Tillich (1963):

> There is an ultimate unity of all beings, rooted in the divine life from which they come and to which they go. All beings, nonhuman as well as human, participate in it. And therefore they all participate in each other (p. 694).

Suggestions of close connections with nature were also revealed in this literature. Uhlein (1983) translates Hildegard of Bingen, "In the midst of all other creatures humanity is the most significant and yet the most dependent upon the others" (p. 87); much of this mystic's writing centers on nature, the cosmos, and humanity's place in relation to them. Centuries later, Pope (1951), in his "Essay on Man", declares that man (humanity) is "Created half to rise, and half to fall; Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all" (p. 34). Pope wrote this essay during the transition from neoclassical to rationalistic worldviews, immediately following the Cartesian revolution. It is undoubtable that Pope would have been influenced by, or at least exposed to, the radical changes brought about by the evolving philosophical ideals. The stanzas quoted appear to support this conclusion and refer to the spiritual and material duality of human nature.

Wordsworth (1983) speaks of "Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles [d]iscordant elements, makes them cling together [i]n one society" (p. 277), and says of the soul, after death, it is "Rolled round in earth's diurnal course, [w]ith rocks, and stones, and trees" (p. 281), or has become a part of nature. Finally, Carman (1946), in a poem entitled "Vestigia", describes her quest for Spirit wherein she discovers personal evidence of God in the harmony and ecstatic experience of nature in all its glory; she refers to "Heaven here and now" (p. 74) as an element of her spiritual illumination.

Each of these authors alludes to a relationship between people and the natural world which enhances the spiritual dimension of humanity.

From time immemorial, humans have engaged in eschatological speculation; this subject is evident in many examples of poetry concerning death, transcendence, and immortality, and comprises the fourth theme discovered. An early description of Hildegard of Bingen's cosmology asserts that "When the elements of the world fulfill their function, they come to ripeness and their fruit is gathered back to God" (Uhlein, 1983, p. 60). That Shakespeare (1963) was concerned with similar matters is apparent in Hamlet's famous soliloquy when he was contemplating suicide; he querulously utters, "For in that sleep of death what dreams may come, [w]hen we have shuffled off this mortal coil, [m]ust give us pause" and goes on "But that the dread of something after death...puzzles the will" (p. 107). Although no tentative answer is suggested, the concern is enough to stultify Hamlet's suicidal ideation.

Donne (1989), a contemporary of Shakespeare, often described as a member of a poet group known as 'the metaphysicals', writes that death is "Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery" and that "One short sleep past, we wake eternally, [a]nd death shall be no more". Waller (1946), writing in the same period as Donne, and marginally later than Shakespeare, in a poem called "Old Age" states, "Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view [t]hat stand upon the threshold of the new" (p. 263). Pope (1951) also considers an afterlife for the human spirit when he declares that "The soul, uneasy and confin'd from home, [r]ests and expatiates in a life to come" (p. 34). Perhaps one of the best examples of a transcendent theme appears in Wordsworth's poetry of the Romantic era when he writes:

> Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
> And even the motion of our human blood
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul. (p. 274)

A fifth theme which appeared in the poetic literature was that of divine immanence, or the indwelling presence of the Deity. Emily Bronte (1983) writes, "O

God within my breast, Almighty ever-present Deity! Life, that in me has rest [a]s I, undying Life, have power in thee!" (p. 436). Bronte appears to have been influenced by the romantic poets in an era associated with animosity and tension between factions adhering to radical rationalism and materialism, and a reactionary romanticism and idealism. More recently, Roethke (1987), in "A Dark Time", queried, "What's madness but nobility of soul [a]t odds with circumstance?" and goes on to state:

> My soul, like some heat-maddened summer fly,
> Keeps buzzing at the sill. Which I is *I?*
> A fallen man, I climb out of my fear.
> The mind enters itself, and God the mind,
> And one is One, free in the tearing wind. (p. 361)

According to Lecker, David, and O'Brien (1987), Roethke was subject to episodes of severe depression and bouts of alcoholism while he remained preoccupied with pursuing subjective experiences of spirituality and the power of nature. His poetry reflects his spiritual quest with its recurring themes of self-transcendence and a journey towards self-knowledge. These themes are unusual for a period of history marked by a predominantly materialistic perspective.

A sixth and final theme discovered in the poetic literature reviewed was a sense of process, or journey, marked by a vital, animating energy. Concerning this, Hildegard of Bingen has written:

> The soul is the firmament of the organism,
> then.
> In the manner in which the soul permeates
> the body with its energy, it causes and
> consummates all human action. (Uhlein, 1983, p. 54)

She further adds:

> Now these things
> are in reference to the soul's life:
> spiritual vitality is alive in the soul
> in the same way as the marrow of the
> hips in the flesh... and,
> The soul is a breath of living spirit,
> that with excellent sensitivity,
> permeates the entire body to give it life. (Uhlein, 1983, p. 60)

Since the aforementioned meditations are pre-Reformation, written at or about the time of the Crusades, they belong to a period in history marked by Christian zealotry which viewed any digression from papal authority as heretic; consequently, human spirituality in this era was closely aligned with religious identity and a wholistic perspective of human nature.

Bronte (1983), in the early nineteenth century, says, "Thy spirit animates eternal years" (p. 436), and Roethke (1987), a century later, remarks that "A man goes far to find out what he is" in reference to his spiritual journey and expresses his ascent from despair in the phrase, "I climb out of my fear" (p. 361). Implicit in Roethke's lines is an energy, or force, impelling him on his journey.

The poetic exemplars provided by these authors illustrate the six themes which recurred frequently throughout this body of literature and provide insights into the spiritual values of Western culture during the historical periods identified. Several attributable outcomes, or products, of spiritual activity were also evident in this literature and include physical calm, insight, peace, contentment, power, understanding, wisdom, hope, happiness, and health of the soul (Bronte, 1983; Davies, 1951; Pope, 1951; Uhlein, 1983; Waller, 1946).

Summary

Each of the etiological and cosmogenic myths which have been presented, with the possible exception of the Sedna myth, either implicitly refers to, or explicitly states, that a global flood occurred prior to this "second creation" and each contained themes which explained the human predicament in terms of disobedience, transferring responsibility to humankind. Explanations for illness and disease were presented, along with the means to avoid them, and, although not outlined, many contained apocalyptic predictions regarding the ultimate demise of humanity. Normative behaviour and rules for social conduct were codified and provided the foundation for moral authority and social justice. In fact, all of the functions described by Campbell (1970) and Day (1984) were apparent in these myths. Cultural variations reflected the underlying social

structure and provided insight into the values, beliefs, and phenomena assumed to be of greatest significance to the culture. Themes relating to a metaphysical dimension were evident in all of the mythologies and transcended cultural boundaries.

The most significant themes discovered in these selected mythologies include an animating energy or life force, a relationship to a deity (or deities), connections to other creatures, harmonious interactions with nature or the environment, and a linear journey marked by adversity and struggle for survival, which culminates in death and a return to a spiritual existence. Secondary themes of transcendence and immanence were also noted.

The poetic exemplars also provide powerful clues to the importance of human spirituality across various historical periods. Conceptualizations of spirituality varied according to the social and temporal context. Six themes concerning spiritual values appeared consistently in this body of literature and included: relationships between humans and God; relationships to others; connections to nature; physical transcendence; divine immanence; and a process or journey of discovery.

One truth stands firm. All that happens in world history rests on something spiritual. If the spiritual is strong, it creates world history. If it is weak, it suffers world history.

Albert Schweitzer

The Historical Context

Although there are many examples of Eastern spirituality which pre-date the generally accepted beginnings of Western philosophical thought, these will not be discussed within the historical context, as a function of the temporal, spacial, and financial constraints of this thesis. Consequently, the following discussion surrounding the evolution of the concept of human spirituality, within the social and cultural contexts of a variety of historical periods, will focus primarily on events and eras succeeding the advent of Greek philosophical thought. Spirit and soul are used synonymously in much of the literature of antiquity (Runes, 1984) and, as such, there has been no attempt to differentiate between them for purposes of this discussion, at least until the period of Cartesian revolution.

From time immemorial, humankind has been concerned with eschatological, philosophical, epistemological, and ontological matters; the existence of an immortal soul, or spirit, was a widely accepted belief until a relatively recent period, despite an evolving conceptual understanding. The pyramids, which predate the Egyptian Book of the Dead by almost a millennium, bear witness to the need to prepare for an existence beyond death (Rawlings, 1978). Ancient Egyptians believed they were created by the same god that created the universe and that they were composed of a natural physical body and at least two souls. These souls could separate from the body and reunite with it at will; at least one of these souls, the heart soul, or life principle (*ka*), was capable of surviving death, whence it had the power to enter heaven and live in a glorified state with the perfected soul of the universe, while the soul of the physical, or bodily nature soul (*ba*), ceased to be at the moment of death (Gregory, 1987; Rawlings, 1978). It is in the Egyptian culture that a doctrine of immortality of the soul first appears.

Greco-Roman period 500 B.C. to 300 A.D.

Many of the early Greek philosophers were influenced by Pythagoreanism, which espoused a duality of body and soul and posited a causal interaction between these two separate and distinct entities (Gregory, 1987). The Pythagoreans subscribed to a belief known as metempsychosis, or the immortality and transmigration of the soul (Gregory, 1987; Runes, 1984). Metempsychosis asserts that when any living thing dies, its soul is transferred to, and successively resides within, another living thing, giving it life (Gregory, 1987). Socrates was influenced by this theory and believed that the soul was wise, divine, immaterial, and immortal (Plato, 1980; Rawlings, 1978; Runes, 1984). He claimed to have been guided throughout his life by the voice of an oracle, or *daimon*, which would warn him whenever something was wrong. Socrates was eventually charged with atheism, for disavowing the accepted religion of the gods, and with seditious teaching of the youth; he was condemned to death by the Athenian court and died by consuming poison (Plato, 1980; Runes, 1984).

Plato was greatly influenced by Socrates and is characterized as having had a spiritualistic perspective on life; he believed that the soul, or spirit, was the source of all behaviour and that its special concern was the development of moral ideals and actions (Gregory, 1987; Plato, 1974). He accepted the Pythagorean premise that the soul pre-existed the physical body and suggested that it was imbued with *a priori* knowledge which it could not directly access due to the weight of immediate physical cares and interests (Runes, 1984). Plato developed a tripartite view of the soul, composed of appetitive (nutritive and generative), emotional, and rational (cognitive and intellectual) parts; he contended it was the rational, thinking aspect of the soul which ruled in a controlled human being (Plato, 1974; Runes, 1984). Plato considered the human soul to be incorporeal and superior to the physical body which hindered its psychic functions. He suggested that sensation, a function of the soul, permitted the soul to 'feel' objects through the body as an instrument; yet, he remained somewhat contemptuous of this function and asserted that a mature, fully developed soul should

strive to rise above the sensual needs and pleasures and try to access the intelligible realm in a more immediate and intuitive manner (Runes, 1984). Plato eschewed the predominant anthropomorphic polytheism of Greek religion, much as Socrates had done, and promoted ideas which were distinctly monotheistic in character (Plato, 1980; Runes, 1984). He clearly taught a doctrine of personal immortality through the soul (Gregory, 1987; Plato, 1974; Runes, 1984) and the influence of his philosophy is evident in the writings of many Renaissance, and later, authors.

Aristotle's early writings reflect the influence of Plato (his mentor, and later rival), in his conviction that the soul is independent of the body, pre-exists it, and is immortal; his later works, however, depart substantially from these beliefs and do not include immortality or a dichotomous mind-body relationship (Gregory, 1987).

Aristotle described the soul as "the simplest actuality of a natural body which has the potentiality of life" (Muirhead, 1900, p. 58); the natural body thus is matter endowed with life. In further explaining Aristotle's doctrine of the soul, Muirhead (1900) states: "The soul is not a mysterious substance lodged in another substance called body. It stands to body as the statue to the marble, or, better still, as the active function to the organ" (p. 58). Since the body is the material (potentiality) to which the soul (function) provides reality (actuality), it is for this purpose that the body exists (Magill, 1961; Muirhead, 1900). Aristotle explained this by using the example that if the eye had life, vision would be its soul, because vision is the reality which expresses the idea of the eye (Muirhead, 1900). According to Aristotle (1947), "as the pupil plus the power of sight constitutes the eye, so the soul plus the body constitutes the animal" (p. 173). Since the soul is herein considered a level of function, the soul would be inseparable from the body.

Aristotle, like Plato, viewed the soul as tripartite, composed of vegetative (nutritive and propagative), animal (sensitive and emotional), and rational (cognitive and intellectual) elements; it is the rational soul which is characterized by deliberative choice and theoretical inquiry (Aristotle, 1947). It is the intellect that Aristotle suggests could

be separated from the body because it is not the act of any corporeal organ and is not, therefore, limited in its potentialities by the senses, unlike the sensitive soul which requires a physical organ as a medium for acquisition of knowledge regarding material objects (Aristotle, 1947; Pegis, 1944). Consequently, although the soul could not survive dissolution of the body, the intellect appears to be independent and incapable of destruction.

The cultural ethos of Hellenism was grounded in an anthropomorphic polytheism that was antithetical to the monotheistic precepts of Judaism which were encountered as the Jews came under Grecian rule (Dimont, 1962). The reciprocal influence of these coexistent, yet diverse philosophical worldviews could not have but altered their respective viewpoints on the soul, and on matters of spirituality. Translation of the Bible into Greek, between 300 and 200 B.C., not only increased its sphere of influence by outlining the history of Judaism, but laid the foundation for Christianity.

The spread of Judaic philosophy was facilitated by the rise of the Roman empire and its subsequent expansion. The advent and spread of Christianity over the next five hundred years gradually changed the philosophical underpinnings of the Western world from a polytheistic to a monotheistic framework and secured a position of authority for the papacy (Dimont, 1962).

Plotinus, a third century philosopher, stated that humans resulted from one of the emanations of the *One*, or universal Spirit, and belonged to both spiritual and material realms (Runes, 1984). The ultimate goal of human life, according to Plotinism, was to achieve a mystical union with the One. Since personal immortality was unquestioned, the spiritual journey was the focus of this philosophy.

Medieval, or Middle Age, period 400 A.D. to 1350 A.D.

Augustine, a proponent of Platonic philosophy during the fourth century, is said to have "Christianized" Plato's works (Runes, 1984). He maintained that humans were composed of a physical body and a rational, immaterial soul, and that the body could exist only if the soul existed (Augustine, 1990). Augustine (1990) asserted that the

body exists only through the soul which receives its form from the Highest Being; he further suggested that although it is an inconvenient medium for the immaterial and immortal soul, the hindrance of corporeality will no longer exist after physical death. The spirit, according to Augustine (1990), is the "user of the body, and the soul is the man" (p. 170). This explanation of human nature resulted from a syncresis of pagan and Christian theology. The Medieval period, or era of salvation, which followed, was marked by the fall of Rome and its inherent polytheism, a steady growth of Christian monotheism, and a concomitant rise in papal power, which continued until the advent of the Renaissance (Dimont, 1962).

The thirteenth century was a time of "crisis of Christian intelligence" (Pieper, 1962, p. 4). The Arab world had preserved much of the Greek philosophy and this was beginning to penetrate into Christian Europe. The first universities were being founded and were incorporating many classical ideals, including philosophy, into their programs of study. Suddenly there was a new and different perspective being proferred which allowed for the possibility of understanding the world through nature and seemed to oppose the traditional Christian doctrine of inferiority of the natural world (Pieper, 1962). This apparently dangerous teaching had been interpreted by a commentator on Aristotle, Averroes, and was deemed by the church to include a number of grave errors. Averroistic peripateticism included teachings that the souls of men were mortal, that the world was not created but always existed, and that human actions are controlled through predestination (Petitot, 1966; Pieper, 1962).

While the assimilation of Aristotelian ideas had begun at the universities (using the approach advocated by Averroes), the church, in an attempt to preserve its tradition, prohibited the interpretation of Aristotle's philosophy. Christian theology was being jeopardized as reason was opposed to faith; the rejection of all suprarational concepts appeared to be ensured. Proponents of the Averroistic interpretation were teaching a theory known as "double truth" which asserted that a proposition could be philosophically true although theologically false (Vann, 1947). Aquinas' understanding

of Aristotle's writings (from the original Greek translation), his knowledge of the Averroistic interpretation, and his awareness of the church's ban on both, made him keenly aware of the intense danger facing the Christian world and the urgent need to effect a unification of Peripateticism and Christian theology. He stated that reason could not prove anything contrary to faith and firmly believed in the complete intelligibility of the universe (Petitot, 1966).

Aquinas found many peripatetic precepts regarding human nature to be compatible with Christianity and stated that humans have both a spiritual and a corporeal nature which are necessarily joined since the soul, having no matter, requires a material body to operate (Aquinas, 1947; Gregory, 1987; Pegis, 1944; Runes, 1984). Aquinas accepted Aristotle's premise that the soul was comprised of different "parts", each with unique powers, which he labelled vegetative, sensitive, and rational (Pegis, 1944). The rational part is the mind, or intellect; it is unique to humankind and capable of physical transcendence. In other words, although the intellect requires the use of a body to function, it is not the *act* of a body (Pegis, 1944). He asserted that it is the level of transcendence of corporeality which distinguishes the various parts of the soul (Aquinas, 1947; Pegis, 1944).

Aquinas maintained that souls are brought into being through a creative act of God and that, although the body will return to dust, the spirit will return to God who created it (Aquinas, 1947; Gregory, 1987; Pegis, 1944). In responding to Aristotle's argument that the soul could not survive dissolution of the body, since it requires sensation to exist, Aquinas stated that "after separation from the body, it will have another mode of understanding" (Pegis, 1944, p. 693); with this statement, he affirmed his belief in the immateriality and immortality of the spirit.

Renaissance period 1300 A.D. to 1650 A.D.

The Renaissance period was characterized by a revival of many of the themes and motifs of classical antiquity and a "re-discovery" of the world and of humanity. Marcilio Ficino, an acclaimed 15th century philosopher, synthesized NeoPlatonic

metaphysics with Augustinian theology and advanced many arguments asserting spiritual transcendence and immortality; he was a leading proponent of Platonian and Plotinian thought during the Renaissance period. These philosophies became a major source of influence through to the end of the 18th century.

It is evident from the foregoing review of pre-Renaissance philosophy that there were many influences on conceptualizations of the human spirit and the spiritual dimension; spirituality and religion were indistinguishable during these historical periods. The polytheism of Greco-Roman antiquity had given way to the spread of Christian monotheism with its doctrine of spiritual immortality. The revival of pagan philosophies (Averroistic and Aristotelian peripateticism, and NeoPlatonism) during the neoclassical period led to a syncretism of ancient philosophy with Christian theology. Despite the subordination of classical theism to Christian dogma, vestigial elements remained and the groundwork was laid for the materialism which developed during the Enlightenment era. During the Middle Ages and throughout the Renaissance, however, the predominant view of the human spirit was grounded in Christian theocentrism, although the underlying classical influence remains evident in the mythological and literary heritage.

Enlightenment period 1600 A.D. to 1850 A.D.

The era of Bacon and Descartes heralded the beginning of the scientific revolution. Bacon's new 'scientific method' advocated empiricism as a means of gaining power and control over nature and of advancing the cause of humankind. Descartes, a contemporary of Bacon, sought to establish a rigorous, analytic method, based on rationalism, which could be used to investigate and explain both scientific and metaphysical phenomena (Knoebel, 1988). Considered a founder of modern epistemology, Descartes was part of the scientific and philosophical revolution which characterized the 17th and 18th centuries. Descartes was convinced there were three kinds of substance: Uncreated Spirit (Creator, God), created, immaterial spirits, or souls, of humankind, and created material bodies capable of extended functions (Runes,

1984). Descartes' theory posits an immaterial-material substance duality which brings two of the substance kinds together in human beings (created spirit and material body). The "physical" substance is measurable and divisible, and the "thinking" substance is immeasurable and indivisible (Gregory, 1987). As a result of this substance dualism, he was "able to doubt the existence of his physical body but not his thinking being and, therefore, concluded that having a body was not part of his essential nature" (Gregory, 1987, p. 189). Descartes also described six passions (emotions) as conscious states of the body-soul complex which, under rational control, permitted the soul to will whatever was good for the body; he insisted that the soul comprised the whole of a human's psychic agency, including any psychological functions (Runes, 1984).

During the Enlightenment period, or Age of Reason, interpretations of reality increasingly reflected the transition in worldviews from a medieval theological perspective toward a modern scientific understanding. This era was characterized by a radical form of rationalism, later known as secular humanism, which attempted to deify reason and science; metaphysics and religion were disparaged and challenged with animosity. Cartesianism created a rift between faith and reason, and the separation between matters of a spiritual nature and those of a scientific nature achieved an accepted status. As the zeal for materialism increased, reactionary opposing positions also developed and flourished.

The idealism of Berkeley (1734/1969) was one such reaction to the spread of materialism; this philosophy held that only immaterial spirits, with their attendant ideas, exist in reality and thereby denied the existence of matter. Berkeley (1734/1969) stated that "this perceiving, active being is what I call mind, spirit, soul, or myself" (p. 65). He suggested that the spirit can only be known by its acts since it is incorporeal, indivisible, incorruptible, and immortal. His philosophy articulates a theistic worldview based on immaterialism, wherein a person exists solely as a mind, or spirit, whose function is to think, understand, will, act and perceive (Berkeley, c. 1734/1969; Gregory, 1987).

Romantic period 1774 A.D. to 1825 A.D.

The Romantic period, which coexisted briefly with the Enlightenment, also developed in response to materialism and neoclassicism. Its epistemological origins were rooted in a philosophy which included intuitive, spiritual, and noumenal experience as a basis for knowledge and focused on the relationships of humans to Spirit, nature, and self (Runes, 1984). It was essentially a form of metaphysical expressionism which inherently valued the direct, unmediated apprehension of natural, and supernatural, experience.

Self, the essentializing quality, the intellect, conscience, and immortality, together constitute Emerson's concept of the soul, or spirit (Bishop, 1964). As a leading proponent of transcendental philosophy, he maintained that human beings can "ascend" through a number of hierarchical, spiritual dimensions, from the lower organic level to the highest level, moral consciousness (Bishop, 1964).

Modern period 1800 A.D. to Present

Contemporary conceptualizations of human spirituality are dependent upon the underlying worldview of the conceiver. Cartesianism, with its assertion of spiritual and physical independence, acknowledges a metaphysical dimension and the existence of *a priori* knowledge which precedes existence and, from an eschatological perspective, will succeed existence (Adler, 1990; Hocutt, 1980). Materialism is rooted in a monist ontology which can be retrospectively traced to the monistic insights of Parmenides (Adler, 1978; Taylor, 1992); it is an extremist position which asserts that matter alone exits, thereby denying the existence of any metaphysical dimension. Consequently, within this framework, human spirituality would either be dismissed entirely, or restricted to an existential explanation as neurological activity. Materialism, despite its humanistic roots, bears a striking resemblance to Averroistic peripateticism, with its inherent errors of interpretation, and also raises the spectre of determinism. Idealism, a purely metaphysical philosophy which developed as a reaction against materialism, emphasizes an immaterial, suprasensuous, eternal, theistic, and teleological worldview,

and questions the reality of matter. Finally, moderate realism is founded on Peripatetic precepts which assert that physical bodies composed of matter and form have both material and immaterial aspects (Adler, 1978, 1990; Aristotle, 1947). This perspective presupposes an objective reality which exists independent of our experience and is composed of natural and supernatural dimensions; consequently, human spirituality may assume a transcendent dimension and address matters of metaphysical and eschatological concern.

Late 20th century philosophers continue to be divided according to preference of the preceding perspectives. Van Kaam (1976), a psychologist and theologian, appears to favour a variation of idealism. He states that the core of a person's self is incarnate spirit; he further asserts that the spirit strives for self-emergence and physical transcendence, the object of which is determined by one's underlying subjective viewpoint. An individual's personal philosophy is influenced by their culture, past experience, religion, and social values and beliefs (Van Kaam, 1976). He argues that the spirit is the dynamic force that keeps the person growing and changing and sees the individual as an essentially emergent self in the process of "emerging, becoming, transcending, or going beyond what it already has become" (Van Kaam, 1976, p. 13). This theory recognizes the influence of numerous intervening variables to determine the development of the transcendent potential.

Another contemporary philosopher, Swinburne (1986), leans towards substance dualism; he describes the body as endowed with physical properties while the mental properties belong to the spirit. Accordingly, "the person is the soul together with whatever, if any, body is linked temporarily to it" (Swinburne, 1986, p. 146); therefore, the spirit is the essential part of the person.

Frankl (cited in Stoll, 1989) describes spirituality as a process of giving meaning to one's life through creative or attitudinal values; he states that this "striving to find meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man" (Frankl, 1984, p. 104). Taylor (1992), in a like manner, asserts that it is a natural human proclivity to employ

metaphysics to imbue life with meaning; this is accomplished through a unique connection to the natural world and a transcendental ability to become one with the universe.

One contemporary philosopher, Isenor (1990), along a more materialist mien, contends that body, mind, and spirit are simply metaphorical statements of the "self". Although he denies any metaphysical conceptualization of "spirit", he concedes the existence of a connectedness, relational in nature, between all human beings throughout the universe.

Moore (1992), from an apparently moderate realist perspective, paraphrases the 15th century writings of Ficino when he states that "the materialistic life can be so absorbing that we get caught in it and forget about spirituality. What we need [Ficino said] is soul, in the middle, holding together mind and body" (p. xiv). When describing the soul, or spirit, Moore (1992) asserts that it "is not a thing but a quality or a dimension of experiencing life and ourselves. It has to do with depth, value, relatedness, heart, and personal substance" and is not "an object of religious belief or [as] something to do with immortality" (p. 5). He adds that spiritual growth occurs in the mundane activities of daily life and emphasizes that a full-bodied spiritual life is as essential as food. The evolution of conceptualizations of the human spiritual dimension, across various historical epochs, demonstrates the importance of context in determining the cultural meaning attributed to concepts.

Summary

Conceptualizations of the human spirit have evolved substantially over time, as demonstrated through this brief historical survey, and have provided the foundations for a variety of diverse philosophical worldviews. The Greek psyche, translated soul, contained aspects of corporeality (sensation, or the sensitive and emotional functions) and immaterialism (spiritual and intellectual functions). The soul, then, appears to have been a psychospiritual complex, residing within the body, with a relationship to the spiritual realm which belonged to a polytheistic religious system. As such, it bears little

resemblance to present conceptualizations of the human spirit or the spiritual dimension. Even the Cartesian view of a created spiritual substance was one which included the complete psychic agency of an individual, including the psychological functions.

The influence of Judaism may have exerted an influence on Greek philosophy and culture, as seen in the apparently monotheistic Platonic conceptualization which was later rejected by Aristotle. The resurgence of interest in Platonic philosophy by Plotinus and Augustine, in the 3rd and 4th centuries, established "Christianized" NeoPlatonism as the accepted philosophy of early Christian ecclesiasts. Although the emphasis had shifted to a monotheistic base, the psychospiritual ambiguity remained; views of human spirituality remained virtually unchanged until the 12th century.

The rise of neoclassicism again cast doubt on spiritual immateriality and immortality and led to a crisis in Christian thought. The syncresis of classical philosophy and Christian theology led to a second period of relative stability regarding views of human spirituality which lasted until the 16th century. The dual-substance theory of Descartes created an irrevocable split in philosophy which continues to be apparent to the present. The rise of secular humanism in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the concomitant increase in opposing reactions, led to a further diversification of philosophies, including material monism, idealism, and moderate realism, in addition to the already-existent Cartesianism; each of these remain in evidence, to varying degrees, to the present. Consequently, when reading literature from these periods, regarding the spirit and/or soul, it is imperative that one be cognizant of the conjunctive nature of spiritual and psychological agency prior to the 17th century. During the Enlightenment period the separation between these domains increased, as is evident in the development of diverse worldviews of reality.

Themes which remained constant across historical contexts, with the exception of materialism for the moment, include: a supernatural relationship with a deity (or deities), relatedness to the natural world, transcendence, immanence, and an integrating energy. Materialism would permit acknowledgement of an existential spirit and an

energy process, within a framework of monism, as neurological activities, but would preclude a metaphysical conceptualization.

The man who sat on the ground in his tipi meditating on life and its meaning, accepting the kinship of all creatures and acknowledging unity with the universe of things was infusing into his being the true essence of civilization. And when native man left off this form of development, his humanization was retarded in growth.

Chief Luther Standing Bear

Aboriginal Cultural Context

Since the aim of this thesis is conceptual clarification, and since it is the diversity of conceptual usage which will lead to concept clarification, it is appropriate to consider Aboriginal conceptualizations of the spiritual dimension. As the original inhabitants of continental North America, Native cultures provide a primary example of 'pre-European' conceptualizations of human spirituality. However, it is impossible to undertake a discussion of this topic without an awareness of traditional lifestyles and of the devastating consequences incurred as a function of European cultural contact. The despiritualization of traditional Native social structure, subsequent to colonial expansionism, laid the foundation for contemporary conceptualizations of the human spiritual dimension. To understand the antecedent conditions and subsequent consequences of the introduction of Western ideology, one must first recognize the significance of certain historical events in shaping current attitudes toward spirituality in Aboriginal communities. The traditional sociospiritual perspectives, and subsequent evolution of spiritual values, are herein presented within the contexts of colonial expansion, European ecclesiasticism, and contemporary spiritual revitalization movements.

In order to simplify presentation of the following material, certain distinctions have been made amongst the various Aboriginal populations of North America. The distinctions imposed seem logical since they are based primarily on anthropological linguistic divisions and "culture areas"; they are broadly-based analytic categories which are frequently encountered in the literature and are not intended to comprehensively portray the current tribal ethos of every particular group. These divisions, identified by

Brody (1987) for Canada and the northern United States, include the Eskimoan speakers of the arctic, now usually referred to as the Inuit, the Algonquian speakers of the eastern subarctic, often called the Innu, and the Athapaskan speakers of the western subarctic, commonly referred to as the Dene. Both the Algonquian and Athapaskan groups extend linguistically into the United States along their respective coastal regions. Within the continental United States, there are three additional "culture areas", described by Wissler (cited in Brown, 1992), including: the Eastern Woodlands (an Algonquin speaking group), the Plains/Prairie tribes, and the Southwest tribes (Pueblo and Navajo), also known as the Dinwe. The Eastern Woodland tribes (predominantly Iroquois, Onondaga, and Mohawk) are Algonquian speakers, and are essentially an extension of the Innu culture; as such, they will be included as part of the Innu cultural area, rather than discussed separately. Each of these linguistic categories and culture areas are composed of many small groups, or tribes, which, despite particular and distinctive dialects and customs, share many similar cultural characteristics. Each of these major groups will be discussed individually to illustrate their particular approach to the spiritual dimension.

Traditional Sociospiritual Perspectives

Traditional Native cultures failed to differentiate between spirituality and other aspects of daily life; health, illness, and personal well-being were explained in terms of an individual's relationship to the natural and supernatural worlds and the degree of fulfillment of social obligations (Couture, 1994; Hallowell, 1977; Parker, 1977; O'Neil, 1988; Sampath, 1988). Spiritual disequilibrium was expressed as disease and necessitated consultation with a shaman, or healer, who was a legitimized functionary with the power to alleviate spiritual distress (Barthelemy, 1995; Foster & Anderson, 1978; Merkur, 1985; O'Neil, 1988; Sampath, 1988; Turner, 1989). Shamanic traditions focused on the growth and development of spiritual awareness, as the foundation for healing and restoration of equilibrium, rather than on physical symptomatology (Barthelemy, 1995). Couture (1994) describes Aboriginal spirituality

as an attitude or gradually developing awareness and experience of the ultimate mysteries of life and one's place in the universe. It is a process of learning to recognize the patterns of immanence and transcendence in relation to the Life-Force and spirit agents. The ubiquitous nature of indigenous spirituality necessitates an examination of the general traditional cultural ethos, including the indivisible unity of spiritual and physical "health".

Inuit Culture (Arctic region)

The Inuit, or Eskimoan speakers, of the Canadian arctic show remarkable cultural diversity in addition to some striking similarities; major divisions include the Iglulik, Ungava, Caribou, Netsilik, Copper, and McKenzie, with some Inupiaq along the Alaskan border. Pre-contact social organization of the Inuit was based upon strong cooperative and communal values necessitated by the harsh environment and precarious food supply. Intergroup harmony and social equilibrium were maintained through a system of clearly prescribed, and strictly adhered to, taboos specific to a variety of social relationships and activities (Brown, 1992). Broken taboos and social transgressions were thought to raise the ire of evil spirits and increase the danger of spiritual retribution (Seidelman & Turner, 1993).

Traditional Inuit religion was polytheistic in nature and suffused all elements of daily life; the chief deity (Arnakapfaaluk, or Nuliayuk), also known as Sedna, demanded the observance of strict taboos in return for an abundant supply of sea animals (Damas, 1972). The spirit of the air (*Hila inua*, or *Sila*), and moon spirit (*Tarqeq*) were subject only to Sedna and controlled the weather and the successful hunting of land animals (Damas, 1972). In addition, a vast host of evil spirits and various minor deities abounded, also requiring constant observance of communal obligations and numerous social taboos to ensure health and prosperity (Damas, 1972; Merkur, 1985; Parker, 1977). Parenthetically, a cultural feature which significantly affected sociospiritual practices was the belief that each individual had three distinct souls (Parker, 1977; Turner, 1989).

Inuit tradition claimed the existence of three types of souls, or *inua*; these included the spirit of living that helped with healing, the name soul (*atiq*) that could be reborn if the name was given to an infant (in this way, the baby inherited some of the "issuma", or wisdom, of the deceased person for whom they were named), and the life-entity, or proper soul (*tarniq*), that left the body at death and was free to be reborn (Brandson, 1994; Parker, 1977; Turner, 1989). An Inuit infant was not considered a complete person until after having been "named" and receiving his/her *atiq* soul, which did not occur until approximately the third to eighth day (Brandson, 1994; Brody, 1987; Parker, 1977); consequently, during periods of scarcity, infanticide was considered acceptable since the infant remained sans soul. Similarly, if an individual was seriously injured, gravely ill, or very elderly, and unable to travel, suicide or geronticide was an acceptable means of freeing the spirit for rebirth.

Inuit spirituality and health were inextricably linked and illness was considered an aggressive or hostile action of evil spirits directed towards an individual who failed to meet social obligations or to keep specified taboos (Brandson, 1994; Brown, 1992; Sampath, 1988). Although individual sin and punishment was recognized, collective guilt was acknowledged also; often, this necessitated ritual communal atonement to appease the spirit world and thereby preclude disease or starvation for the entire group (O'Neil, 1988; Parker, 1977). Supernatural beings (gods), non-human beings (evil spirits), and certain humans (sorcerers, witches) were all capable of inflicting disease or punishment (Parker, 1977) and generally precipitated consultation with a spiritual specialist and healer, or shaman.

The Inuit shaman (*angatkuq*) was a legitimized spiritual and medical functionary who was acknowledged to have established intermediary abilities and connections to the supernatural world. The derived powers meant that shamans, as hierophants, were imbued with great power, and greatly feared, as a result of their ability to attain ecstasy and manipulate spiritual forces in the pursuit and use of their craft, either for good or for evil purposes (Brody, 1987; Damas, 1972; Foster & Anderson, 1978; Grim, 1983;

Merkur, 1985; O'Neil, 1988; Parker, 1977; Sampath, 1988; Turner, 1989; Weil, 1983). Functions of the shaman included, foretelling the future, reviving or speaking to the dead, procuring game for the hunters, quelling storms and inclement weather, finding lost people, establishing taboos, healing disease, providing charms, determining violations of social mores, divination, attacking and killing evil spirits, seizing and returning fleeing souls of sick individuals to their physical bodies, and malevolent practices (Brandson, 1994; Brody, 1987; Damas, 1972; Foster & Anderson, 1978; Grim, 1983; Merkur, 1985; O'Neil, 1988; Parker, 1977; Sampath, 1988; Seidelman & Turner, 1993; Turner, 1989; Weil, 1983).

Shamans generally acquired their thaumaturgic powers through a process of "election" by the spirits; this process involved personal spirit possession (through disease, near death, and a prolonged recovery) during which a vitalizing power and mysterious gifts were imparted to the individual by tutellary spirits, who subsequently became spirit helpers, to the shaman initiate (Grim, 1983; Merkur, 1985; Sampath, 1988). Shamanistic practices often included a public divination ceremony (*qilaniq*), to entreat spirits to reveal taboo infractions and to establish disease causation (Foster & Anderson, 1978; Grim, 1983). The shaman could heal by "sucking" out harmful intrusions (objects or spirits) from the body, by entering a dissociative trance and permitting spiritual possession in order to commune with the supernatural, by taking a disembodied spirit journey to retrieve lost souls, by poking (minimal bloodletting) a diseased area, or by intermediation with the supernatural to determine breaches of social conduct and their requisite penances to ensure reestablishment of social harmony and restoration of health (Dixon & Kirchner, 1982; Grim, 1983; Merkur, 1985; O'Neil, 1988; Sampath, 1988; Turner, 1989).

Inuit spirituality went beyond individual cognition to include societal mores and values, resulting in expanded conceptualizations of the spiritual domain. Central to Inuit spirituality were the values of harmonious relationships with the spirits of creation, the social group, and the natural environment. Harmony was attained through maintenance

of social equilibrium in addition to the entreatment and placation of spiritual forces and, as such, was a continual process. Spiritual transcendence and immanence were inherent aspects of Inuit spirituality which were supported by thaumaturgic agents, as required.

Innu Culture (Eastern Subarctic and Woodland regions)

The Innu, or Algonquian speakers, of the eastern subarctic include the Cree, Naskapi, Montagnais, Ojibwa (Salteaux), Ottawa, and Blackfoot nations. The tribal ethos of the Innu was one of rugged individualism and self-reliance (Andrew & Sarsfield, 1985); the precarious food supply and constant environmental dangers made self-reliance, strength, and endurance necessary qualities for survival. Traditionally, the Innu believed a child was born sans soul and must be protected from evil spirits until a reincarnated soul could enter, and become established in, the individual (Grim, 1983; Hallowell, 1977; Parker, 1977). From the time the soul became permanently lodged in a child (approximately five years of age), children had their dependency needs frustrated in an effort to promote strength, stoicism, and independence; this was accomplished through strict and severe discipline and a series of lengthy fasts which eventually resulted in aggressive self-reliant behaviour (Grim, 1983; Hallowell, 1977; Parker, 1977; Rogers, 1972). The single most important act in Innu childhood was the pre-pubertal vision quest during which a prolonged, self-induced starvation precipitated a dissociative state and provided the initiate with an opportunity to access the supernatural; the object was to attract the attention of a particular manitou, or sacred power who would take "pity" upon and adopt the child, thereby establishing a lifelong mutual contract between them (Grim, 1983; Parker, 1977; Rogers, 1972). The manitou power thus acquired would then ensure spiritual assistance and strength, whenever needed, provided that social taboos remained inviolate (Grim, 1983; Parker, 1977).

Tribal authority was virtually non-existent in Innu society, since it was assumed that each adult would be guided by his/her personal manitou spirits. Therefore, no attempts at willful domination of others occurred and each individual's beliefs and choices had to be respected.

Spirituality strongly pervaded all aspects of Innu culture and traditions. Health was viewed as the harmonious interaction of person and environment and disease causation was determined within a personalistic and polytheistic framework (Grim, 1983; Hallowell, 1977; Rogers, 1972; Parker, 1977). Illness, or disharmony, was never considered to be the result of impersonal forces; it was seen as punishment from spiritual powers as a consequence of personal or social infractions committed by a particular individual (Parker, 1977). Since guilt and punishment were strictly attributable to the individual, there were no community ramifications or collective atonement. The repressed anger and frustration, heretofore mentioned, and the overwhelming need for independence, resulted in a perceived internal lack of control and a projection of omnipotent qualities to external sources, which precipitated an extreme dependence upon supernatural deities (Grim, 1983; Parker, 1977). Constant supplication and propitiation of the manitou was required for the maintenance of an abundant lifestyle. Recovery from illness required introspection, either individually or in consultation with a medicine man, or shaman, to determine from the spirits the social breach committed and the requisite penalty for appeasement (Parker, 1977). Atonement often included acts of confession, fasting, solitude, flagellation, and/or self-mutilation (Parker, 1977).

The Innu shaman possessed a variety of manitou spirits, with their associated numinous powers, with which to practice his/her art. Grim (1983) describes four shamanic divisions and concludes that each shaman may have had access to one or more of the following four types of power. The tent-shaking diviner (*tcisaki*) communed privately with the manitou, or helper spirit, who then revealed "hidden truths" (such as social indiscretions) which could be used as the basis for restoration of supernatural-natural harmony. The tube-sucking shaman (*nanandawi*) was the tribal doctor who could "suck" intruded objects or spirits from the body and "blow" them away. The fire diviner (*wabeno*) used hot coals to interpret personal visions and dreams to heal the sick. Finally, the family shaman (*meda*) was responsible for drumming and chanting

for the sick, for herbal healing, and for establishing dream contact with animal spirits to procure future contracts for the hunters, thereby ensuring an adequate food supply. In all cases, rites of purification, often using a sweat-lodge, or *inipi*, ceremony were undertaken, prior to a vision quest, in order to invoke the spirit realm (Brown, 1992; Rogers, 1972).

A major distinction between Native Indian and Inuit shamanic traditions is evident in the method used to access the supernatural; whereas the Inuit shaman, during an ecstatic trance, would send *out* one of his souls to the spiritual world to discern transgressions committed, the Indian shaman would attempt to draw his helper spirits *into* himself (Brown, 1992). Innu medicine men served a dual purpose; they were expected to act as "social adjudicators as well as religious functionaries" to restore physical, social, and supernatural, relationships (Foster & Anderson, 1978, p. 125).

Iroquoian spirituality, to a greater degree than most other North American Indian tribal cultures, acknowledged a supreme and unitary principle; their term *Orenda* describes a supreme Creator power which extended to the multifold manitous, or lesser spiritual powers (Brown, 1992). Innu spirituality encompassed elements of transcendence, immanence, and harmonious relationships with the Creator, lesser spirits, self, others, and the environment.

Dene Culture (Western Subarctic region)

The Dene, or Athapaskan speakers, of the western subarctic, include the Dogrib, Hare, Kutchin, Beaver, Slavey, Tutchone, Tlingit, Carrier, Tahltan, and Chippewyan nations. The tribal ethos of Dene culture was one of social harmony and individual endurance; however, the importance of community support and cooperation was also recognized as a function of the demanding physical environment and tenuous food supply (Abel, 1992; Helm, 1972). The Dene emphasized characteristics such as generosity, flexibility, physical stamina, adaptability, hospitality, and egalitarianism; social control was established through group disapprobation and ostracism (Abel, 1992; Helm, 1972). One outstanding feature of Dene society was the profound respect

awarded every individual. Each person had an intimate personal and spiritual relationship with the environment; consequently, all decisions and choices of others had to be respected (Abel, 1992).

The Dene believed that illness was caused by sorcery or malevolent spirits; in fact, all events were attributed to spirit activities and none were ever considered to be random (Abel, 1992; Krech III, 1989). Spirituality permeated all aspects of Dene life; the natural world (including all animal life) was seen as contiguous with the supernatural, and the entire of adult life was spent living in both realms simultaneously (Abel, 1992). The Dene believed that some ancestral spirits were reincarnated as newborns, or as animal souls, and a virtual panoply of spirits surrounded and influenced every individual (Abel, 1992). Health was believed to be a personal state of harmony with the natural and supernatural environments; therefore, the maintenance of smooth social and spiritual relationships was paramount (Abel, 1992; Helm, 1972). Since illness was considered to be divine punishment for the transgression of personal or community taboos, retribution could be exacted from the individual or the entire community; consequently, indulgence in arrogance, jealousy, selfishness, or sexual indiscretion threatened the well-being of the whole community (Helm, 1972). Public confession, phlebotomy, sweating, and/or self-mutilation were appropriate, often necessary, responses for ensuring restoration of spiritual equilibrium (Abel, 1992; Krech III, 1989). If the aforementioned methods proved ineffective in the attainment of harmony and health, vengeance was considered necessary to combat the malevolence of others and frequently feuds and wars were engaged in with close inhabitants who were suspected of being the perpetrators of malevolent sorcery (Krech III, 1989). Since each Dene member had potential access to a source of unlimited spiritual power, it was in the best interests of all of Dene society to ensure and maintain harmonious social relationships.

Abel (1992) states that there is no evidence that Dene children pursued a vision quest, as described in Algonquian Indian cultures, however, at some time most did

adopt a spirit mentor who taught them a special invocation, provided supernatural aid when called upon, and who acted as a spirit helper in the pursuit of daily activities. The key to Dene spirit power was "dreaming", or dream power. Through dreams the soul could leave the body and travel to the spirit world, or along game trails, to make contracts with animals for their future sacrifice to hunters or to seek promises of assistance from the deities (Abel, 1992; Brody, 1987; Helm, 1972).

As in every society, there were individuals with exceptional abilities to access the supernatural and, in Dene society, those individuals with powerful spirit world contacts often gained prominence as shamans. Shamanic roles included controlling the inclemencies of weather, curing illness, divining the whereabouts of game and causes of disease, and predicting the future; healing included spirit consultation, the extraction of foreign intrusions from the body, and herbal medicines (Abel, 1992; Helm, 1972). Despite the rugged, competitive individualism considered of paramount import in Dene society, communal values were additionally acknowledged as requisite for survival. Dene spirituality revolved around social responsibility, immanent and transcendent relationships with the spiritual realm, and harmony with their environment. Process is implicit in the continual striving for harmonious relationships.

Plains and Prairie Culture (Central United States region)

The Plains and Prairie culture area is comprised of the Sioux, Cheyenne, Crow, Blackfoot, Arapaho, Lakota, and Shoshone tribal nations, and, according to Brown (1992), they have the greatest diversity of traditional cultural heritages. The historical origins of the Plains Indians can be traced to the Athapaskan (or Athabascan), western subarctic, the Algonquian woodlands of the east, early Southeastern traditions, and certain Uto-Aztecan tribes of the southwest. However, similar adaptations to a grassland environment, and the increasing use of horses to herd bison across the plains, led to a commonality of sociocultural and spiritual practices being developed (Brown, 1992); consequently, these groups became identified as a specific and unique cultural tradition. Each of the aforementioned groups acknowledged a multiplicity of spiritual or

sacred powers which tended to gradually coalesce into a mysterious, invisible, ultimate unity, or Supreme Being, that was, and continues to be, known by the Sioux as *Wakan-Tanka*, or the Great Mysterious (Fisher & Luyster, 1991). The myriad spiritual beings of lesser power were specific to forms of nature, were associated with the life energy, and possessed powers that could be transferred to other beings (Brown, 1992; Fisher & Luyster, 1991). These two main sources of spiritual power were accessible to all since they were everywhere, both within and immediately surrounding each individual.

The spiritual values of the Plains Indians were demonstrated in three major ritualistic forms: the *inipi* ceremony, or sweat-lodge, the Sun Dance ceremony, and the individual vision quest. The *inipi* ceremony was used as a means of ritual purification and encouraged the realization that one was connected to the entire universe and, through the spirit world, contained the universe and all its numinous powers within oneself; it involved a process of dissolution (separation from impurities), reintegration (into a purified whole), and unification (metaphysical transcendence) with the universe (Brown, 1992). The Sun Dance, a prayerful four day dance of self-sacrifice and ceremonial purification, was a supplication to the Great Spirit for energy and renewal of the self, the tribe, and the universe (Fisher & Luyster, 1991). Finally, the pre-pubertal vision quest, which was expected of every young male and often of most females, involved a rigorous retreat with complete isolation, fasting, and often self-mutilation as a means of acquiring a personal spirit guardian. The guardian spirit would manifest itself through a vision, reveal something of the individual's purpose in life, provide special spiritual powers, and remain accessible to the individual throughout life (Brown, 1992; Fisher & Luyster, 1991). These elements of purification, sacrifice, and spiritual integration were present during each use of the sacred tobacco pipe which served as a portable altar and support for spiritual practices (Brown, 1992; Fisher & Luyster, 1991). They comprise the core of the spiritual legacy of the Native Indian traditions of the Great Plains.

Within this culture area, disease was considered either an individual or a

collective responsibility and was not seen as impersonal or objective in nature; spirituality, health, and social values were completely interwoven and contributed to a harmonious relationship with the natural and supernatural worlds, the outcome of which was psychophysiological, spiritual, and social well-being. As in the previously described cultural groups, the Plains Indians had spiritual specialists, usually referred to as "medicine (wo)men" who fulfilled the shamanic functions and acted as spiritual intermediaries, or experts, in circumstances requiring greater spiritual powers than could be accessed directly by an individual. These hierophants served similar roles to those of the Innu and Dene cultures.

The spiritual nature of the Plains Indians can be summed up in the words of Black Elk (cited in Brown, 1992), a well-respected Lakota Sioux medicine man:

> Peace...comes within the souls of men when they realize their relationship, their oneness, with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that at the center of the Universe dwells *Wakan-Tanka*, and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us. (p. 39)

The spiritual ethos of the Plains and Prairie tribes was founded on principles of universal interconnectedness of life, individual person-Creator relationships, animating energy from multifold deities, harmonious relationships, transcendence and immanence.

Dinwe Culture (Southwestern region)

The Dinwe peoples of the American southwest are composed primarily of two major, linguistically distinct cultural groups, the Pueblos and the Navajos. The Pueblo Indians, or Uto-Aztecan speakers, include the Hopi, Comanche, Shoshone, Nahuatl, and Zuni traditions. These diverse groups share a common linguistic and cosmological heritage which traces its historical roots to early Aztec cultures. The Pueblo cosmos can be described in terms of a duality involving a sacred, subterranean, supernatural world and a profane, terrestrial, natural world. Consequently, their most sacred ceremonial sites and places of access to the spiritual realm, are found in underground *kivas*, or ceremonial chambers (Brown, 1992). Although the Aztecan influence is evident in the Pueblo Indian culture, it is beyond the scope of this thesis and will not, therefore, be

elaborated upon; however, the underlying spiritual values of supernatural, sacred relationships and transcendence are unmistakable. The comprehensive spiritual nature of the Pueblo value and belief systems continue to remain well-entrenched in the events and activities of daily life and have, therefore, been little affected by the acculturational attempts of predominant expansionist powers.

The Navajo are Athapaskan speakers whose ancestral heritage can be traced to the western subarctic Dene tradition. Although Navajo culture syncretically absorbed selected elements from the neighbouring Pueblos and from Spanish expansionist powers, a distinct Navajo identity, with its Dene heritage, was maintained (Brown. 1992). The underlying Navaho world reality was based on the delicate equilibrium of bi-polar characteristics inherent in human beings and on harmonious interrelationships with the environment. All symptoms of illness reflected spiritual disharmony which had to be restored through participation in a "sing", or "chantway", during which the *Yei* (gods) were compelled to be present, with their attendant spiritual powers, for healing and restoration of spiritual equilibrium (Brown, 1992; Weil, 1983). These ceremonies often lasted from seven to ten days; rituals were symbolic rather than shamanistic and relied on patterns and chance as opposed to soul flights (Weil, 1983). The influence of Spanish Catholicism on traditional Navajo spiritual practices was minimal, according to Brown (1992), due to the incompatibility of the unique central cultural values of each:

> What is involved is not only the Navajo fear of contamination with ghosts of the dead in relation to the crucifixion of Jesus, but also, the central rites of Holy Communion involve what to the Navajo are abhorrent acts of cannibalism. (25)

The antithetical spiritual precepts of Spanish and Navajo theology ensured the relatively stable transmission of traditional Navajo spiritual beliefs across generational boundaries; inroads made by Protestantism fared only marginally better. Core values of the Navajo belief system included a process of increasing spiritual awareness and maintenance of harmony within the self and between the self and all of creation, as well as immanent and transcendent relationships with the gods and Creator spirit.

Colonial and Ecclesiastical Influences

European contact had considerable influence on aboriginal cultures. The myriad effects of culture contact, first with Indian tribes, and later with Inuit groups, contributed to the disruption of traditional ideologies and social structure. Perhaps the most serious consequence of contact was the introduction of devastating new diseases that decimated populations and concomitantly challenged the Native spiritual worlds (Bone, 1992; Dobson, 1991; O'Neil, 1988; Sampath, 1988). The cataclysmic effects of disease, as a function of Euro-Canadian contact, diminished shamanistic influence and undermined the ontological foundations of Native life, a corollary of which was the rudimentary disjunction of spiritual and medical functions in many of these cultures. The arrival of missionaries further reinforced this separation.

Roman Catholic and Anglican emissaries were the primary representatives of Christian exploration; their goal was to establish missions, undermine existing native spirituality, and advance the cause of the Church through acculturation of the "heathen" societies (Abel, 1992; Coates, 1992). Early historical records indicate a preponderance of Roman Catholic influence in the eastern Canadian Indian cultures which rapidly spread westward with the traders and trappers. The Spanish influence in Mexico and the southern United States spread northwards in similar fashion. The exploits of various Oblate orders stimulated the Anglican church to also send envoys to North America, primarily into Inuit regions, to compete for souls with their Roman Catholic counterparts. Despite increasing missionary rivalry, the Anglican church gained strength among the Inuit and the Roman Catholic orders assumed greater prominence amongst the Innu, Dene, and Plains tribes. The missionaries of all denominations denigrated many traditional customs, prohibited social death (infanticide, suicide, geronticide), denounced the 'pagan' deities, and presented an alternative form of socio-economic and spiritual organization (Abel; 1992; Coates, 1992). Since shamanism did not exclude potential Christian values, missionaries often conscripted shamans into helping them to indoctrinate group members, and once doctrines were well-accepted,

turned their authority towards discrediting and suppressing shamanic influence (Brody, 1987). Simultaneously, the advent of new diseases, with their attendant consequences, proved too great a challenge for the ineffective ministrations of the shaman and traditional magico-religious beliefs lost credence (Abel, 1992; Sampath, 1988). According to O'Neil (1988), early missionaries and traders disseminated medical resources as a means of assuring religious and/or economic loyalty. This introduced an element of rivalry between shamans and missionaries which further decreased the thaumaturgic power of the hierophants (Grim, 1983; Sampath, 1988).

For many Natives, the diminished influence of the shaman simply required a switching of allegiance to the missionaries who were thought to have equivalent numinous powers and connections to the spirit world. The benevolent God of the Christian missionaries presented an enticing alternative to the host of evil deities of traditional Native spiritual and religious systems. Several parallels can be drawn between Roman Catholicism and the indigenous spiritual beliefs of many Indian societies; both stressed the importance of confession, charismatic or ecstatic rituals, the concept of fasting, and a multitude of propitious saints capable of divine intervention in daily activities. Inuit social systems, with their communal values and emphasis on reciprocity and the formation of alliances, found Anglicanism more compatible since priests were granted freedom to marry and procreate. Anglicanism also retained an element of evangelicalism important in Inuit life. The overwhelming similitude of spiritual powers meant that many Natives simply treated the missionaries as shamans and apparently felt free to transfer allegiance based on observable spiritual powers and the abundance of game animal supplies. The shaman, however, still enjoyed a modicum of respect and privilege derived from fear of retaliatory spiritual power and the potential to inflict harm (Abel, 1992). The residential schools which were established removed children from traditional cultural influence, derided the indigenous lifestyles and perpetuated ecclesiastical influence (Coates, 1992). The overzealous missionaries "tragically believed that it was necessary to try and wipe out all vestiges of cultural,

religious, and economic values that natives had practised" (McCullum & McCullum, cited in Abel 1992, p. 78); the repercussions of despiritualization of traditional Native cultures has remained evident to the present.

Despite European ecclesiastical influence and expansionism, many Aboriginal peoples have retained their traditional spiritual values and beliefs while selectively accepting other elements from the dominant society (Wilbush, 1988). Native revitalization movements, such as the "Spirit Movement", call for a "return to basic values" (Mala, 1988, p. 46); implicit in this statement is an acknowledgement of traditional ancestral spiritual practices and values which include a sense of supernatural and natural interconnectedness, and a profound respect for all life.

Summary

Colonial expansionism affected the underlying spiritual unity of traditional cultural lifeways to varying degrees. Although historical records indicate large numbers of religious conversions, much of the missionary success has been greatly exaggerated. Many authors suggest that a gradual incorporation of only those elements of Christianity that enhanced pre-existing Native spiritual beliefs were pragmatically adopted while the fundamental, underlying tenets of traditional beliefs were retained; therefore, despite superficial acquiescence and changes in overt spiritual practices, many traditional values and beliefs continue to exist and shamanism is still influential, although less readily apparent (Abel, 1992; Brody, 1989; Brown, 1992; Damas, 1972; Fisher & Luyster, 1991; Helm, 1972; Rogers, 1972; Sampath, 1988; Turner, 1989). In other words, Native spirituality was not simply supplanted but was syncretically and selectively transmuted as pragmatism dictated and its underlying traditional philosophies continued to be valued. Brody (1987) suggests that shamanic influence is evident and surprisingly strong amongst the Dene, Innu, and Plains tribes and is apparent, although better concealed, amongst the Inuit. Attempts to seek to maintain traditional spiritual values and access to the supernatural world are increasingly demonstrated by the spontaneous attempts at respiritualization inherent in the revitalization movements. The traditional

Pueblo and Navajo spiritual and cultural beliefs have remained relatively intact despite the Spanish expansionist influence.

Each of the cultural areas and linguistically distinct indigenous populations which have been described provide a substantially more holistic perspective of human nature and the spiritual dimension than the exegetic reductionism inherent in Western spiritual and religious practices. In all examples of Aboriginal traditions, spirituality was integrated into, or embedded within, daily activities and events (Couture, 1994) and natural and supernatural realms were contiguous.

A thematic analysis across these diverse Aboriginal cultural contexts reveals a remarkable similarity of underlying values and conceptualizations of the spiritual dimension. These include transcendent and immanent relationships with a deity (or deities) and cosmic Creator Spirit, a reverence for all life in the natural environment, harmonious interpersonal relationships, and an interactive process involving spiritual energy.

Soul always remains united by its higher part to the intelligible realm. But if the part that is in the realm of sense dominates, or rather becomes dominated and disturbed, it keeps us unaware of what the higher part of the soul contemplates.

Plotinus

The Context of Developmental Life Stages

Much of the literature regarding conceptualizations of human spirituality refers, either explicitly or implicitly, to a developmental process. Spirituality is almost universally conceived of as a dimension of human nature which is present, at least potentially, from birth; actualization occurs to varying degrees and in many diverse manners as a function of numerous mediating variables. All forms of developmentalism imply dynamism as an inherent assumption; consequently, the maturational process involves periodic or constant, unidirectional evolution, or a gestalt process of "becoming". This is a logical assumption since all new postulations are dependent upon a previous knowledge level; therefore, age, experience, culture, and cognitive level are all factors capable of influencing an individual's spiritual development and conceptualization of spirituality. The following discussion of spiritual dimensionality is set within the context of developmental stages of the human life cycle.

Life cycle developmental stages are characterized by a series of tasks which must be accomplished before movement to the next stage can occur; stages are sequential, although they may be passed through at varying rates. The end of one stage and the beginning of the next is marked by a transition point, or crisis, which precipitates movement to the next stage; periods between transitions are characterized by relative stability. Developmental theories which comprise the framework for the following discussion are those advanced by Piaget, Erikson, Kohlberg, and Fowler.

Piaget proposes a series of four stages of cognitive development which place limitations on the range of conceptual possibility as well as on the rapidity with which stages can be transmigrated; progression through to the final stage is generally achieved

by about puberty (Atkinson, Atkinson & Hilgard, 1983). Erikson suggests a series of eight psychosocial stages which characterize human development over the lifespan; these stages demonstrate a dialectical formulation of tasks which embody bi-polar tension at each stage of development (Atkinson, Atkinson & Hilgard, 1983; Brewer, 1979; Carson, 1989). The degree to which the tasks of each stage are successfully negotiated will affect an individual's perceptions and conceptions of major social phenomena. Kohlberg's six stages of moral development reflect the maturation of reasoning, or the level of abstract logic (Atkinson, Atkinson & Hilgard, 1983). The interplay of cognitive, psychosocial, and moral factors determines the individual's functional level and forms the foundation for Fowler's seven stages of faith development (Brewer, 1979; Carson, 1989). Faith, in Fowler's model, represents the ascriptive source of meaning; it is the essential quality that acknowledges the supreme values, or purpose, of life and is often used to describe spiritual development. The extensive research bases of these four authors form the theoretical framework for a reflective discourse concerning spirituality as it pertains to the human life cycle. Stages have been grouped together into three broader categories for analytic ease of discussion and include childhood, adult, and elderly groups.

Childhood groups

Stages of infancy, early childhood and pre-school, or toddler, school-age, and adolescence have been included in this category. Although very little literature concerning spirituality in these stages exists, there are a number of childhood developmental factors which will affects its future actualization.

During infancy, from birth to one year, knowledge about the world is acquired through interactions with caregivers; these initial social experiences form the basis of Erikson's first psychosocial stage, during which the primary developmental task is the balance of trust and mistrust (Atkinson, Atkinson & Hilgard, 1983). If experiences are positive, gentle, and loving, a relationship of trust is formed which will affect all of life's future experiences, including the ability to form further trusting relationships

(Carson, 1989). Failure to successfully accomplish this task results in a sense of mistrust, and feelings of anxiety. During this period, the infant may also be experiencing a beginning awareness of anticipatory hope or expectation that needs will be met through the caregiver relationship (Carson, 1989). This is the stage of primal faith development, described by Fowler, wherein the requisite elements for spiritual growth (trust and hope) are acquired in rudimentary form (Carson, 1989; Winkelstein, 1989).

The early childhood period (approximately 2-3 years of age), according to Erikson, brings with it the developmental task of achieving autonomy and self-control; it is a time of independence and struggle for impulse control (Atkinson, Atkinson & Hilgard, 1983). The sense of self-worth and control which develops helps the child to see value in others and provides a sense of power in accomplishment; inability to successfully master impulses leads to self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy and shame (Atkinson, Atkinson & Hilgard, 1983; Carson, 1989). A sense of self-worth is important if a relationship to God (or a higher power), and to other individuals, are to be established in the future (Carson, 1989). The pre-school, or toddler, period, from approximately three to five years of age, represents what Erikson called a psychosocial crisis of industry versus guilt; this stage is characterized by intentionality of action and self-discipline (Atkinson, Atkinson & Hilgard, 1983; Carson, 1989). Children learn to obey rules in this first stage of level one, preconventional morality, as described by Kohlberg, although obedience is primarily a means of punishment avoidance (Santrock & Bartlett, 1986). Self-discipline and the ability to conform to socially imposed behavioural rules prepares children to later adopt parental and institutional codes of behaviour. This period coincides with Fowler's stage of intuitive-projective faith; children of this developmental level mimic the religious activities and gestures of their parents and imaginatively formulate mental pictures of God, the devil, and death that depict the personified visage complete with associated protective or menacing power (Carson, 1989; Winkelstein, 1989). In families devoid of religious experience,

allegiance is transferred to the value system of the parents; however, the basic process occurs in a similar manner. During the latter phase of this stage, the orientation changes somewhat in that children begin to conform to rules in order to receive rewards from God, parents, or others, rather than simply to avoid punishment (Carson, 1989; Santrock & Bartlett, 1986). Ability to value self and others, conformity to rules, intentional behaviour, self-control, and faith in a value system, albeit external, all suggest that the development of spiritual dimensionality has begun.

During the school-age period, from approximately six years of age to puberty, children are attempting to increase their proficiency in intellectual, social, and physical skills; success leads to a sense of industry and competence, while failure results in feelings of inferiority (Atkinson, Atkinson & Hilgard, 1983; Carson, 1989). Cognitive development has reached the concrete operational stage, described by Piaget, in which children are able to employ logic when used in terms of concrete objects but are unable to logically consider abstract ideas (Santrock & Bartlett, 1986). Moral development is at the conventional level and conformity to rules is a function of social approval and avoidance of censure; many individuals do not progress beyond this level of conventional morality (Santrock & Bartlett, 1986). Fowler suggests that this is the stage of mythic-literal faith (Brewer, 1979) which encompasses dichotomous ideas such as good/evil, right/wrong, and good/bad (Winkelstein, 1989). Children accept the value system of their parents and immediate community, complete with the inherent stories and rules; in a religious home, God may be envisioned as an arbitrator or policeman with a system of reward and punishment, and in a nonreligious home, explanations regarding the workings of the natural world, or belief in a universal power, may be accepted (Carson, 1989; Winkelstein, 1989). Children are beginning to develop a conception of the supernatural although it is generally transferred to concrete or personified images (Carson, 1989). The emphasis on skills acquisition and mastery, combined with the ability to conceive of a spiritual dimension, permits relationships and imaginative/creative activities to assume transcendent qualities (Carson, 1989). By the

time puberty is reached, the ability to grasp metaphysical ideas is beginning and the foundation for future commitment, in terms of relationships, has been laid.

Adolescence beings at puberty and extends roughly from age twelve until the late teens; at this point, Piaget's final cognitive developmental stage has been reached. The formal operational stage marks the transition from concrete logic to abstract, symbolic forms of logic, enabling philosophical and ideological speculation; full cognitive development, at least in its basic structure, is generally achieved by mid-adolescence (Atkinson, Atkinson & Hilgard, 1983; Santrock & Bartlett, 1986). This is also the period in which post-conventional morality may be attained since it requires cognitive power to have reached the capacity for abstract logic. Moral development at this level begins with a social contract orientation and may proceed to a morality of conscience whereby internal ethical principles control behaviour so that self-condemnation is avoided; societal rules may be violated if they conflict with personal principles (Santrock & Bartlett, 1986). This stage of moral development may never be attained, and many individuals remain in the stages of conventional morality. Adolescence is characterized by the search for personal identity, according to Erikson's psychosocial theory; parental beliefs and values may be questioned and often peer group values, or those of other significant figures, are tried (Atkinson, Atkinson & Hilgard, 1983). Adolescents attempt to synthesize the values and appraisals of important others into a consistent, integrated, individual image which will be recognized by others in society; failure to accomplish this task results in identity confusion (Carson, 1989; Santrock & Bartlett, 1986). Confidence and security in one's unique identity is essential for the formation of relationships with God (however conceived) and with others. Fowler calls this a stage of synthetic-conventional faith (Brewer, 1979); it is characterized by the integration of diverse stories, beliefs, and values into a coherent self-identity and by a developing sense of meaning and purpose in life (Carson, 1989; Winkelstein, 1989). Although beliefs and values may be internalized by this stage, they remain largely derived from others and have not been reflexively and critically evaluated (Carson, 1989;

Winkelstein, 1989). The search for meaning and purpose in life is the hallmark of spirituality as identified almost universally throughout the literature. It is not until abstract logic is possible that metaphysical concepts can be integrated into cognition, and without a secure sense of self-identity, committed relationships to others are not possible and the self cannot be transcended.

Each of the developmental theories that have been presented demonstrates a maturational progression which is requisite for spiritual actualization. A foundation for spiritual growth may be laid during infancy, through development of trusting relationships, and it is evident that spirituality can develop spontaneously and independent of religious practice as a result of cognitive, psychosocial, and moral levels of development. By the end of adolescence, the capacity for cognitive and moral development has been reached and spiritual development has clearly begun.

Adult groups

The stages of early and middle adulthood have been grouped together within this category. In addition to the aforementioned developmental theorists, Peck (1993) offers an alternative theory of spiritual development that also makes use of maturational stages for explanation; it will be briefly outlined after discussion of the aforenoted theorists. Peck's theory encompasses elements of cognitive ability, moral reasoning, psychosocial development, and growth of faith into a synthetic unity which describes the process of spiritual growth across the life cycle stages of, primarily, adulthood and beyond.

Early adulthood, according to Erikson's theory, encompasses the struggle to successfully balance intimacy and isolation; the achievement of this task results in the formation of intimate, caring relationships and shared experiences (Atkinson, Atkinson & Hilgard, 1983; Carson, 1989). Beliefs and values are reflexively examined and evaluated as philosophical and ideological choices are deliberately determined; Fowler terms this the stage of individuative-reflective faith. According to Carson (1989), it is not uncommon for individuals in this life stage to have an authentic spiritual experience which, although it is experienced, often defies explanation. It may be interpreted in

terms of a divine manifestation or secular self-actualization; regardless of its attributed mode of apprehension, it is capable of precipitating a life-altering choice. Subsequently, a conscious decision may be made to develop a relationship with God (however conceived) or to disregard the experience. For some, becoming aware of a natural or supernatural power beyond the self is a gradual process rather than the result of a specific event; those who have adopted a secular humanist perspective may interpret spiritual awareness as a call for further self-actualization (Carson, 1989). Either way, spiritual consciousness has been raised.

The ability to form and maintain stable, intimate, and loving attachments on an interpersonal level also affects the individual's ability to develop lasting commitments in the spiritual domain. A secure self-identity, the ability to form close relationships, and the capacity and willingness to assume responsibility for decisions and choices, combine to prepare the individual to reach beyond their personal boundaries to experience existential and transcendent possibilities. Whether the spiritual potential becomes fully realized is a function of these developmental influences.

As the individual progresses to middle adulthood (roughly ages 40-65), (s)he becomes concerned with productivity, child-rearing and launching, social issues, and future generations; the developmental task, according to Erikson, is to balance generativity with stagnation, or self-absorption (Carson, 1989; Santrock & Bartlett, 1986). This is a period of reflexivity in which values are re-examined and imparted to children thereby providing the foundation for their future development; these values may range from metaphysical to humanist and direct the course of subsequent growth. Successful achievement of this task leads to a sense of satisfaction that one has made a positive contribution to future generations; however, feelings of discontent may accompany the realization that some of the goals set in youth may never be attained (Atkinson, Atkinson & Hilgard, 1983). As individuals continue to examine their values and beliefs during this period, they begin to embrace life's paradoxes and acknowledge that their personal interpretation of reality may be only one of may possible

interpretations of cosmic reality (Carson, 1989). Fowler has termed this period the stage of paradoxical-consolidative, or conjunctive, faith (Brewer, 1979; Carson, 1989); it is characterized by an orientation of sacrifice and service to others and an attitude of unconditional caring (Carson, 1989).

During this midlife period, as retirement approaches, the inevitability of death may be realized, resulting in a shift in focus; priorities are reordered due to perceived temporal limitations and eschatological matters become of increasing concern, causing attention to be redirected towards the spiritual dimension of one's life. Westerhoff (cited in Carson, 1989) suggests that this period embodies a struggle to diminish spiritual dissonance and demonstrate one's beliefs through behaviour. Spiritual development is evident in sacrificial attitudes and unconditional acceptance in relationships which may be directed vertically towards God (or a higher power) or horizontally towards others.

Elderly, or late Adult, group

Late adulthood, after 65 years, is a period of constant adjustment to the inevitable losses associated with aging. For some, physical decline, debilitating illnesses, loneliness, retirement, or death of loved ones may contribute to lowered self-esteem and feelings of isolation; others may experience satisfaction, enjoyment, new relationships and activities, and a sense of freedom from many previous responsibilities. Erikson's final psychosocial stage reflects a struggle between integrity and despair and marks a period of increasing reflection. To the extent that the individual has successfully met the challenges faced throughout the life cycle, (s)he develops a sense of integrity and satisfaction in a life well lived (Atkinson, Atkinson & Hilgard, 1983). Despair results from retrospective regrets and disappointments.

As the prospect of death draws ever nearer, eschatological questions assume greater significance and philosophical speculation may precipitate a transition to Fowler's final stage of universalizing faith (Brewer, 1979; Carson, 1989). Although this stage is more characteristic of late adulthood, it is possible to achieve the requisite

level of cognitive, moral, and spiritual maturity during middle adulthood as a function of a variety of intervening factors. Universalizing faith consists of a sense of cosmic interconnectedness, a sense of responsibility for the shared needs of creation, and attempts to achieve universally harmonious relationships (Carson, 1989).

Peck (1993), a noted psychiatrist and motivational speaker, proposes four stages of spiritual growth. His stages are broader and more inclusive than those previously described, however, despite the differences in approach, his theory shares many common characteristics with the aforementioned theories. Peck's spiritual stages appear to apply predominantly to the post-pubertal stages and overlap considerably with the stages of early, middle, and late adulthood. The following is a description of Peck's (1993) theory of psychospiritual development, based on clinical psychiatric experience, as it compares with the frameworks already discussed.

Stage one is labelled "chaotic/antisocial" and can be summed up as a period of "lawlessness". Individuals in this stage are described as unprincipled and antisocial in the sense that they are self-serving and manipulative in their pursuits. It is a period of chaos since willpower is absent, leaving the person without the ability to intentionally modulate their behaviour. This stage coincides with Kohlberg's preconventional morality (concern is for self and survival only) and demonstrates a failure to master Erikson's psychosocial tasks of attaining self-control in early childhood and acquiring a positive self-image during adolescence. A lack of self-discipline and a secure identity precludes the ability to form close committed attachments, so relationships are superficial and spiritual development is retarded or arrested.

Stage two, or the "formal/institutional" stage, may be thought of as a period characterized by rigid adherence to rules, or the "letter of the law". Institutions, such as the church, prisons, corporations, or the military, provide rules of governance for individuals in this level. The church is the primary institutional authority to which individuals submit themselves and persons within this stage become very attached to the

forms, rituals, and rules of the organization as a means of providing order and stability in their lives. Although a transcendent relationship to God (however defined) is often expressed, its focus is generally external to the individual and at a distance; an immanent relationship is not understood. Institutional principles are internalized but remain largely unexamined as in Fowler's stages of mythic-literal and synthetic-conventional faith. Moral reasoning equates to Kohlberg's conventional morality with its rigid conformity to social convention and desire for reward. As with Fowler's and Kohlberg's stages, development may not proceed beyond this level and changes to institutional rituals or challenges to normalized patterns of behavior will be perceived as threatening to the individual's identity. Although spiritual growth can occur in this stage, it is constrained by the individual's interpretation of institutional rules, boundaries, and expectations. It is, therefore, shaped by the organization.

Stage three, labelled the "skeptic/individual" stage, can be characterized as a period of "religious doubt or disinterest" despite the questioning attitude evident in other areas of life. Many individuals in this stage are scientifically oriented or are truth seekers searching for knowledge of ultimate reality; occasionally, glimpses, or insights, into reality will lead a person beyond this stage to an awareness of a universal connection, or an authentic spiritual experience. When "truth", or "reality", is glimpsed, the individual may begin to see parallels with the myths and superstitions encountered during the second stage of psychospiritual development; conversion to stage four is often a consequence of such insights. Skepticism, or the questioning of one's values and beliefs, corresponds to Fowler's individuative-reflective faith and to either of Kohlberg's conventional or post-conventional moral stages. Just as in either of the first two stages, individuals may remain at this level. Many people in stage three profess to be atheist or agnostic and reject any claims of a metaphysical realm; others may consider spirituality purely on an existential plane.

Stage four is the final psychospiritual stage, labelled "mystical/communal", where the "spirit of the law" represents the characteristic attitude. A relative few individuals

reach this stage of development; however, those who do are able to see the underlying interconnectedness of the universe. To achieve this state, one must be capable of embracing paradox, enjoying mystery, and recognizing community. This stage contains aspects of Fowler's final two stages, those of conjunctive faith and universalizing faith, with their inclusion of polarities, appreciation of myth, and acknowledgement of cosmic connectedness. The recognition of universal interdependence and concern for principles of social justice parallels Kohlberg's post-conventional stage of moral reasoning.

According to Peck (1993), oftentimes individuals perceive a degree of threat when confronted by succeeding stages; for example, people in stage two may fear the skepticism of stage three, or the freedom from institutional constraints of stage four. Individuals in the skeptical third stage may feel threatened by the mysticism and comfort with paradox which is evident in their scientifically oriented peers in stage four. Threat is perceived only from individuals further along in their spiritual journey. These stages may be traversed as a gradual process of conversions or as a series of rapid transitions, depending on a variety of potential variables, and many individuals concerned with spirituality do not progress beyond the formal/institutional stage. The recognition of universal connectedness introduces elements of mysticism, transcendence, and immanence. Spirituality is relational in terms of deity, others, and the environments and is perceived as a gestalt process.

Summary

Although each of these developmental theories focuses on a different aspect of human "be-ingness", they share a number of common features which can be related to spiritual dimensionality. Life cycle stages are generally presumed to be universal and ordered; sequencing is inviolate. Each stage coincides, with some degree of approximation, to chronological age, and individuals must pass through each stage. The end of each stage is marked by a juncture, or transition point, which then becomes the point of origin for the next stage; the middle phase of each stage is a time of relative stability. Progression through developmental stages is a continuous process which

builds on preceding stages and may be characterized by a gradual evolution or by sudden shifts.

From the comparison of Fowler's faith stages and Peck's spiritual growth stages with Piaget's cognitive stages, Erikson's psychosocial stages, and Kohlberg's moral stages, it is apparent that there is significant interaction between chronological age and physiological, psychological, social, cultural, and cognitive factors which influences spiritual development. Each stage of spiritual growth encompasses these same factors although they are combined in qualitatively different ways. Perhaps one of the primary constraining factors influencing spiritual development in the early years is the inability to think in abstract terms before the advent of puberty. Although children are capable of conceptualizing, to some degree, the natural and supernatural realms, they are limited to visualizing these dimensions in concrete terms. Once abstract thought is developed, a whole new realm of possibilities can be imagined; critical reflection and creative speculation lead to independent evaluations and conceptualizations of social phenomena and practices which continue throughout adulthood. Metaphysical abstractions and ideals can be consciously considered and evaluated using the critical reflective techniques of philosophical contemplation; consequently, spiritual issues and pursuits are potentially subject to deliberative choice. Pre-pubertal spiritual development prepares the way for post-pubescent growth as evolution from stage to stage brings increased individuation and higher levels of consciousness. Awareness of these potential mediating variables facilitates spiritual assessment; arrested development can be traced to probable sources, and interventions based on identified spiritual need and level of maturity. For example, framing explanations in concrete terms for pre-adolescents, and bearing in mind the imaginative and rational properties of each developmental stage, can facilitate and enhance spiritual growth through stage-determined interventions. Each of these developmental elements contributes significantly to spiritual maintenance and growth and affects the individual's ability to form committed relationships with God, others, environment, and self. It is not possible to understand contemporary

conceptualizations of human spirituality without an awareness of the contributing factors and accumulative nature of tasks associated with various developmental life cycle perspectives.

Conceptual analysis of spirituality in the developmental stages context revealed themes of relationship formation to God (however conceived), other individuals and the environment, transcendence (as going beyond self), and an evolutionary process of growth. Both positive and negative feelings concerning self, resulting from the accomplishment of developmental tasks, were seen as evidence of spiritual maturation or its lack thereof. Major outcomes of spiritual development included a sense of meaning and purpose in life, self-actualization, and feelings of self-worth, control, trust, love, and competence. Factors promoting spiritual growth included age, moral reasoning, cognitive ability, psychosocial adjustment, culture, and past experience. The only antecedent found was the universal acknowledgement of spiritual potential.

You would not find out the boundaries of the soul, even by travelling along every path: so deep a measure does it have.

Heraclitus

Contemporary Theoretical Context

Most of the available literature concerning the human spiritual dimension is of a theoretical disposition. It is the product of centuries of philosophical speculation and skepticism, sociohistorical and cultural influences, and evolving scientific knowledge; it is largely untested, however, due to its inherent ambiguity and the problems of objectification which are associated with metaphysical phenomena. Questions concerning the epistemological origins and ontological nature of human spirituality have stimulated contemplative introspection, logical argumentation, and attempts at empirical verification, employing diverse methods of philosophic and scientific enquiry. The consequent knowledge obtained, concerning the existence and influence of spiritual dimensionality on overall individual well-being, demonstrates the relevance of spirituality to the human sciences in general, and nursing in particular.

The concept of spirituality can be identified in the literature under a variety of alternative epithets, including religion, presence, meaning in life, hope, and faith; generally, however, it is described as a cognate of spirituality, such as spirit, spiritual dimension, spiritual distress, spiritual need, spiritual well-being, spiritual perspective, or soul. Despite the specifically applied taxonomic label, there is an underlying similarity of shared characteristics amongst these terms. Since much of the philosophical, psychological, anthropological, and theological literature concerning the spirit, or soul, has already been presented under previous headings, it will remain somewhat limited in this section. Themes have been proximally grouped to demonstrate interrelationships which unite to form the conceptual nature, or quiddity, of human spirituality.

Conceptual confusion surrounding the spiritual dimension appears to stem from a

variety of interrelated factors; these factors can be categorized as related to either the blurring between psychological and spiritual dimensional boundaries, or the interchange and assumed synonymity, by some authors, of spirituality and religiosity. Despite the overlapping use of empirical indicators for each of these dimensions and concepts, distinctions between them must be analytically clarified so that spiritual needs underlying them can be recognized and met.

Spirituality and the Psychological Dimension

The separation of spirituality from science that began as a consequence of the rise of logical-positivistic philosophy, and the increased emphasis on the scientific method and verifiability, led to the proposition of dual substance and material-monist theories, as previously discussed. These philosophies either relegated spirituality to the domain of theology (Byrne, 1985; Duke & Brown, 1979; Garrett, 1979; Savramis, 1979), subsumed it under the psychological dimension (Dickinson, 1975; Dettmore, 1986; Piles, 1990), or dismissed it entirely (Burnard, 1987). This confusion remains evident in literature to the present. Since spirituality, as a metaphysical entity, is beyond the bounds of scientific objectification, its presence can only be inferred through manifestations of emotional or physical expressions and behaviours, which further perpetuates conceptual ambiguity.

A study by Highfield and Cason (1983) to investigate nurses' ability to recognize spiritual concerns found that over half of the 100 nurses surveyed identified signs of spiritual well-being as belonging to the psychosocial domain; this same study suggested that psychosocial and spiritual distinctions were poorly addressed in nursing programs. Piles (1990) attempted to clarify the distinction by asserting that spiritual concerns reflect relationships between individuals and their God, while emotional, or psychological, concerns reflect intrapersonal needs and interpersonal relationships; she adds that spiritual concerns should not, therefore, be confused with, or subsumed under, the psychological dimension. Vaillot (cited in Dickinson, 1975), however, earlier described spiritual as "those forces which activate us, or the essential principle

influencing us. Spiritual, although it might, does not necessarily mean religious; it also includes the psychological. The spiritual is opposed to the biological and mechanical, whose laws it may modify" (p. 1791). This conceptualization reflects the historical influence of substance duality wherein spiritual, psychological, and religious concerns were thrown into metaphysical opposition to material scientism. It also resembles the classical Greek conception of psyche, or soul, which included aspects of corporeality and metaphysicality. Piepgras (1968) also subscribed to the view that spiritual and emotional needs are related and claimed both are expressed through psychological manifestations. Donley (1991) asserts that patient care would be more humane if spiritual support amplified psychological interventions, and Peck (1978) goes even further and states that mind and spirit are one and the same and, therefore, spiritual and mental development are synonymous.

Dettmore (1986) interviewed 63 nurses in an exploratory study to determine their conceptions of, and practices in, the spiritual dimension of nursing. Although nurses were able to clearly differentiate between psychosocial, religious, and spiritual concepts, she concluded that psychosocial knowledge and skills are essential prerequisites to the recognition of spiritual concerns and learning. These findings are supported by developmental theory, as previously presented, which alludes to life experience and maturity (cognitive, psychosocial, and moral) as factors influencing actualization of spiritual potential.

Moberg (1979), a sociologist and pioneer in the field of spiritual well-being, has significantly contributed to current conceptualizations of the spiritual dimension through his attempts to delineate empirical social referents of spirituality. He indicates that, since spirituality is interwoven with all aspects of life, including material and psychic, it cannot be dissociated from either of these domains; consequently, indicators of spiritual well-being must include psychosocial and biophysical referents. A phenomenological study by Dunajski (1994), examining nurses' experiences of spirituality, supports the contention that the spiritual and psychological dimensions are interrelated and preclude

analytic distinction. Clearly, conceptual consensus has not yet been achieved.

Since spiritual experience is amenable only to direct apprehension, as a function of its metaphysical status, it seems apparent that it will continue to present a challenge to empirical verification; yet, its acknowledged presence and influence requires that attempts be made to delineate is conceptual boundaries. Perhaps the solution lies not in a determination of rigid psychological and spiritual dimensional boundaries but in the underlying ascription of meaning to a particular relationship, as Piles suggests.

Spirituality and Religiosity

The distinction between religion, or religiosity, and spirituality has been poorly delineated; these terms are frequently interchanged in the literature and it is only recently that they have begun to acquire greater specificity (Hamner, 1990; Kreidler, cited in Emblen, 1992). Just as with the psychosocial dimension, confusion between these concepts originates from the historical disjunction of science and metaphysics. The banishment of spirituality to the province of theology kept spirituality closely aligned with the church and religion for many decades. Additionally, the historical association of nursing with religious communities, hospitals, and schools of nursing ensured that the traditional religio-spiritual heritage, specifically the embodiment of spiritual care in religious practices, continued as a foundational element underlying nursing programs and education even as they moved further into the secular humanistic and scientific domain (Keegan, 1994). Consequently, the concepts of religiosity and spirituality inadvertently came to be seen as interchangeable counterparts of the debate between metaphysics and empirics.

Literature from the period of the 1960's and 1970's demonstrates the lack of conceptual differentiation, at least in the social sciences, between religiosity and spirituality. Religion was viewed as synonymous with the spiritual dimension (Brewer, 1979; Duke & Brown, 1979; Garrett, 1979; Savramis, 1979), as an indicator, or measure, of spiritual well-being (Moberg, 1979), and as a regulatory code of behaviour for ensuring social control and conformity (Benson, 1979; Dowdy, 1979). The inability

of science to provide answers to many questions of ultimacy, philosophy, noumenality, and eschatology, has caused attention to be refocused on spirituality and, tangentially, on religion, and the need to distinguish between the two concepts has become increasingly apparent. More recent literature shows evidence of greater conceptual specificity and recognition that spirituality and religion, although related, are distinctly different concepts. Spirituality is generally acknowledged to be a broader concept than religion (Arnold, 1989; Burkhardt, 1991; Colliton, 1981; Emblen, 1992; Heriot, 1992; Moberg, 1979; Peterson & Nelson, 1987; Soeken & Carson, 1987; Trice, 1990) which encompasses religion as merely one aspect of its multidimensional nature (Burkhardt, 1991; Oldnall, 1975). Salladay and McDonnell (1989) emphasize that religion is not only a smaller concept but may or may not be a necessary component of spirituality. Moberg (1979) states that spiritual well-being is not synonymous with religion but is more expansive and less constrained than religion; of spiritual well-being, he states:

> Its functional definition pertains to the wellness or 'health' of the totality of the inner resources of people, the ultimate concerns around which all other values are focused, the central philosophy of life that guides conduct, and the meaning-giving center of human life which influences all individuals and social behavior. (p. 2)

Religion, according to Legere (cited in Carson, Winkelstein, Soeken & Brunins, 1986), represents a personal belief system that "codifies dogma, settles on rituals and establishes traditions that are designed to perpetuate the original experience of the founder" (p. 612); it exemplifies a particular value and belief system and provides an ethical-moral code, or framework, for behaviour (Carson, 1989; Mickley, Soeken & Belcher, 1992). Religious concerns generally reflect a combination of sociocultural values and personal philosophies (Brooke, 1987; Burnard, 1987; Dowdy, 1979; Heliker, 1992; Labun, 1988; Trice, 1990; Wald & Bailey, 1990; Widerquist, 81991). Religion refers to organized rules of worship and rituals directed towards God, or a higher power, which serve as a means of spiritual expression for a community (Allport, 1961; Carson, 1989; Emblen, 1992; Heriot, 1992; Labun, 1988; Mealey et al., 1989;

Nagai-Jacobson & Burkhardt, 1989; Peterson & Nelson, 1987; Stoll, 1989) and provide a moral code of conduct (Ellis, 1980; Neuman, 1989; Urdang, 1980).

Mansen (1993) suggests that there are two components to religion, including a unifying force that provides a framework for behaviour and a reflective religious practice component concerned with a relationship between an individual and God (god). This definition includes aspects concerned with spirituality as well as aspects of religion, once again demonstrating conceptual ambiguity. Peck (1993) further confuses the issue by adopting William James' definition of religion as "the attempt to be in harmony with an unseen order of things" (p. 233) for his definition of spirituality.

Dettmore (1986) proposes a definition of religion, derived from the collective reports of nurses in an exploratory research study, which claims it is "a formal expression of spirituality that is manifested in tangible rituals and doctrine" (p. 132); this description fits with Allport's (1961) declaration that religion provides a vehicle for expressing an individual's subjective spiritual experiences.

Emblen (1992) examined the evolving definitions of religion and spirituality within the nursing literature published between 1963 and 1989, using concept analysis techniques, and developed the following synthesized definitions from the most commonly used terms adding only conjunctive words. Emblen (1992) described religion as a "system [of] organized beliefs and worship [which the] person practices" (p. 45). The more inclusive term, spirituality, was defined as the "personal life principle [which] animates transcendent quality [of] relationship [with] God or god being" (p. 45). Conceptual differences are readily revealed through a comparison of these two definitions.

Although the issue of whether religion is a necessary or simply contingent component of spiritual dimensionality has been queried in the past; it is clear that the terms are no longer considered synonymous and that spirituality is a broader and more inclusive concept than religion. This linguistic expansion of spiritual conceptualizations may be related to the increased emphasis on inclusion of humanistic and pluralistic

perspectives in discussions of spirituality. Adherents of specific philosophies, such as humanism, agnosticism, and atheism cannot be excluded simply for conscious rejection of religious precepts. Spirituality, as evidenced through the various contexts presented, appears to transcend cultural, sociohistorical, and temporal boundaries, yet religion does not. Religion provides another context of expression from which spirituality may be abstracted. Religion, therefore, must bear a purely contingent relationship to spirituality and the essential nature, or quiddity, or spiritual dimensionality remains unchanged with its exclusion.

Spiritual Potential as a Universal Phenomenon

Stoll (1989) states that "Spirituality is a dimension within every person - religious, atheist, or humanist" (p. 11), and Broccolo (1990) also asserts that "Everyone, including the atheist, the hedonist and the narcissist, has a spirituality" (p. 13). Many authors concur and maintain that, although a universal, innate component of humanity, the spiritual dimension may be denied or remain undeveloped, or dormant (Boyd & Mast, 1989; Broccolo, 1990; Carson, 1989; Moore, 1992; Neuman, 1989; Peck, 1993; Pierce & Hutton, 1992; Piles, 1990; Watson, 1988; Widerquist, 1991). Keegan (1994) suggests that spirituality is a yearning within every individual which, although it varies in intensity, seeks to connect with the eternal; it is the shared life principle of humanity that provides an orientation towards living and affects all phenomenal experience (Fallding, 1979; Moberg, 1979). The spiritual dimension, then, is a constitutive element of personhood which may be described as an indispensable aspect of the central core of an individual, or the essential self.

Conceptual ambiguity was evidenced in the literature through use of the term 'spirituality' to describe both the innate spiritual potential, available from birth, and spiritual actualization, developed over time, which Haase, Britt, Coward, Leidy and Penn (1992) labelled spiritual perspective. To further differentiate between these two types of spirituality and enhance semantic clarity, I propose that the universal quality which inheres every individual from the beginning of life be termed spiritual potential.

Spirituality, level of spiritual actualization, and spiritual perspective all refer, then, to the acquired developmental status of the human spirit. Spiritual potential was the only antecedent condition identified, through conceptual analysis techniques, as requisite to spiritual development.

Spirituality as Integrative Energy

The spiritual part of a person's life is often considered the integrating force for all other dimensions (Allen, 1991; Burns, 1989; Byrne, 1985; Curtin, 1991; Ellis, 1980; Haase et al., 1992; James & James, 1991; Nagai-Jacobson & Burkhardt, 1989; Reed, 1992; Savramis, 1979; Stoll, 1979; Walker, 1992), the life principle (Dickinson, 1975; Dombeck & Karl, 1987; Fallding, 1979; Walker, 1992), the animator or animating force (Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 1994; Lane, 1987), and a constant and creative source of energy (Burkhardt, 1991; Neuman, 1989; Pierce & Hutton, 1992; Stuart, Deckro & Mandle, 1989) that provides vitality and vibrancy to life (Burkhardt, 1989; Renetzky, 1979; Stuart, Deckro & Mandle, 1989; Van Kaam, 1976; Williams, 1991).

The etymological origin of the terms spirit and spirituality is derived from the Latin *spiritus* and the Greek *pneumatikos*, both of which refer to breath or wind (Runes, 1983; Urdang, 1980). All of the words for breathing (inspiration, respiration, and expiration) contain the Latin root of spirit; consequently, the act of breathing is irrevocably associated with the very principle of life, or the human spirit. This animating quality, or integrative energy, as I propose to call it, may be related to existential or to metaphysical subjects and involves reflection, introspection, and the search for meaning and purpose in life. Metaphysical spirituality is generally centred on God, a deity, a higher power, or, as in the Aboriginal traditions, a diffuse coalescent of sacred mysteries (Brown, 1992). Existential spirituality focuses on a humanistic perspective and is related to specific values, beliefs, or principles that are held as ultimate, or highest, values and used to provide direction in life; these values act as motivating forces which impel the individual towards self-actualization (Arnold, 1989; Carson, 1989; Karns, 1991; Mickley, Soeken & Belcher, 1992; Stoll, 1989).

Carson (1989), a nurse author, has written extensively about the spiritual dimension and describes spirituality as a transcendent force that connects human beings with a greater power. Spiritual dimensionality involves an evolutionary process, or integrative function, whereby individuals ascribe purpose and meaning to their lives (Brooke, 1987; Carson, 1989; Donley, 1991; Flynn, cited in Walker, 1992; Heliker, 1992; Labun, 1988; Reed, 1991; Stoll, 1989; Trice, 1990). Carson (1989) contends that "spiritual knowledge is intuitive, a type of inner vision providing a level of emotional discernment and cognitive information that surpasses human reasoning and is not mediated by the external senses" (p. 323). Carson (1989) also specifically articulates a concept of the soul and argues that body, mind, and spirit "are dynamically woven together, one part affecting and being affected by the other parts" (p. 9). Stallwood (cited in Stoll, 1989) has developed a conceptual model of the nature of humans which illustrates the dynamic interrelationships amongst the biological, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. The spirit forms the central core, or God-consciousness, of the model which diffuses outwards through, and is infused and influenced by, the other aspects (psychological and biophysical) of human nature.

Stuart, Deckro and Mandle (1989) describe spirituality as a vital force, or transcendent energy, that has the capacity to profoundly influence all aspects of life, to elevate individuals from the humdrum of daily life, and to assist in the ascription of meaning and provision of direction to life. Each of the aforenoted interpretations of spirituality describes an energy force or activity which strives for self-integration, or wholeness.

Spirituality as Relationships

Virtually all of the available literature concerning the human spiritual dimension refers to its relational nature; primarily four types of relationships were revealed, including relationships with God (however defined), others, nature/environment, and self. Prior to 1970, spirituality essentially remained the province of religion and definitions overlapped considerably, as previously discussed. Consequently,

spirituality generally alluded almost exclusively to human-God relationships; since that time, however, conceptualizations of spirituality have expanded to include more general linguistic terms which permit inclusion of humanistic and materialistic philosophies. The human-God relationship described in past literary contributions, in current literature refers to any god, deity, power greater than self, Ultimate Other, cosmic source, or absolute consciousness. For individuals who subscribe to philosophies that deny a metaphysical dimension, it may also include any value(s) which are considered of supreme importance and which are used to guide and direct one's life.

During the period of heightened interest to determine social indicators of spiritual well-being in the 1970's, Moberg (1979) assisted the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging to define spiritual well-being of the elderly as "the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community and environment that nurtures and celebrates wholeness" (p. 5). Moberg (cited in Thorson, 1980) suggests that an individual's belief in God is strongest in the declining years of life; he also identifies a number of components to spiritual well-being of the aged, including: sociocultural sources of spiritual needs; relief from anxieties and fears; preparation for death; personality integration; personal dignity; and a philosophy of life. These referents encompass interpersonal relationships, existential concerns, eschatological matters, and intrapersonal integration.

During this same period, Mindel and Vaughn (1978) conducted a study of the religious behaviours of 106 elderly Missourians as an indication of "disengagement", or mutual severance of ties between the aging individual and his/her social system, in both organizational and non-organizational forms of behaviour. They concluded that the elderly may appear to be disengaged, from an etic perspective, yet actually be fully engaged, from an emic point of view. Data supported the hypothesis that disaffiliation from traditional religious organizations does not necessarily reflect a decrease in internal beliefs but perhaps indicates a transfer of allegiance to a more subjective, personal form of non-organizational beliefs and practices.

Stoll (1989) has developed a cruciform conceptual schema that illustrates a two-directional process model of spiritual interrelatedness and depicts the continual influences exerted by health, illness, developmental, and temporal factors. The vertical process illustrates a transcendent relationship with God, or a higher being, as defined by the individual, and the horizontal process involves intra- and interpersonal relationships (Karns, 1991; Stoll, 1989). An individual's relationships, both vertical and horizontal, if grounded in love, trust, and a sense of forgiveness, will lead to meaningful existence and a sense of existential well-being (Stoll, 1989).

Moberg (cited in Ellison, 1983) also conceptualizes spirituality with vertical and horizontal components; the vertical plane refers to a sense of well-being related to God (god), and the horizontal plane relates to existential well-being as determined by a sense of life satisfaction and purpose. Stoll (1989) and Moberg (1979) both agree on the nature of the vertical plane of spirituality, as related to God (god), and would appear to be subsuming aspects of a psychological nature (relationships to others and self, life satisfaction and fulfillment) under the umbrella term, spirituality. Moberg's (1979) depiction of spirituality as dichotomous influenced the direction of research undertaken by Ellison. Ellison (1983) recognized the human-God dyad as spiritual in nature, and existential relationships as psychological. He asserts that:

> It is the *spirit* of human beings which enables and motivates us to search for meaning and purpose in life, to seek the supernatural or some meaning which transcends us, to wonder about our origins and our identities, to require morality and equity. It is the spirit which synthesizes the total personality and provides some sense of energizing direction and order. The spiritual dimension does not exist in isolation from our psyche and *soma*, but provides an integrative force. (p. 331)

Ellison (1983), in conjunction with Paloutzian, developed the Spiritual Well-Being (SWB) Scale to measure the religious and existential components of spiritual well-being in an attempt to differentiate between the spiritual and psychological dimensions of the concept. The instrument has been widely tested and is considered to be a reliable and valid tool for measuring spiritual well-being. It contains two 10-item scales that are summed together for an overall score. Ten items measure religious well-

being and contain references to God; the other ten measure existential well-being and refer to meaning and purpose in life, and life satisfaction, without reference to religion. Both vertical and horizontal dimensions of spirituality involve transcendence, or "a stepping back from and moving beyond what is" (p. 331); consequently, the items contained in the SWB scale are designed to measure transcendent concerns related to phenomenal experience, such as meaning, ideals, faith, commitment, purpose in life, and relationship to God.

A number of authors describe spirituality as a vertical process that strives towards an ideal, embodied as God or a higher consciousness, and view horizontal relationships as psychosocial in nature (Christy & Lyon, 1979; Duke & Brown, 1979; Karns, 1991; Moore, 1992; Piepgras, 1968; Piles 1990; Salladay & McDonnell, 1989); in this respect, they differ from the majority of authors who consider interpersonal relationships to be part of the spiritual domain. Piles (1990) states that the spirit "seeks to worship someone or something (such as God) outside one's own powers that controls and/or sustains the person especially in a time of crisis" (p. 38). This view is consistent with descriptions of vertical relationships as described by Ellison (1983), Karns (1991), Moberg (1979), and Stoll (1989).

Faith

The term faith was found to recur periodically in reference to spiritual development throughout the literature reviewed and was frequently interchanged with it. Carson (1989) states that faith may be viewed as a noun (a belief in, or assent to, something unseen) or as a verb (a way of being, living, or imagining). According to Tillich (cited in Savramis, 1979), faith is "the experience of being captured or grasped by that which is one's ultimate concern" (p. 122); it is considered a prerequisite developmental achievement for spiritual actualization (Carson, 1989; James & James, 1991; Moberg, 1979; Salladay & McDonnell, 1989; Widerquist, 1991). Carson (1989) believes that faith may be given by God (god), and yet, also has a developmental quality

(Carson, 1989). According to Carson (1989), these qualities of faith given and faith developed correlate with the horizontal and vertical aspects of spiritual growth. Fowler's stages of faith development are based on the assumption that faith is the quality that permits individuals to ascribe meaning to life and acknowledges life as meaningful (Carson, 1989).

Westerhoff describes four stages of faith, including experienced, affiliative, searching, and owned (Carson, 1989). Experienced faith (infancy-early adolescence) is developed through rituals and interactions with others in a specific faith tradition. Affiliative faith (late adolescence) represents belongingness, participation, and assent to authority within the faith community. Searching faith (young adulthood) is characterized by skepticism and a search for personal meaning beyond what has previously been experienced. Owned faith (middle adulthood-old age) emerges out of a desire to put faith into personal and social action. Westerhoff's stages are similar, although more compressed, to Fowler's stages of faith and closely parallel Peck's psychospiritual stages, as described in the developmental context. Each of these conceptualizations implies that faith development is a dynamic and continuously evolving process. It appears that faith and spirituality are so closely interwoven as to be almost indistinguishable in the literature. However, faith appears to lay the structural framework (capacity for relationships) upon which the relationships (including their quality and intensity) of human spirituality are built.

Immanence

One theme which was frequently, but not consistently, observed, yet pertains specifically to relationships with God (however defined), was that of immanence. Immanence refers to the indwelling divinity, or godhead, within an individual. Divine immanence has been described as the Holy Spirit (James & James, 1991; Peck, 1993), the Source within, or basic indwelling principle (Keegan, 1994), the inner light (Peck, 1993), and the *Imago Dei*, or image of God, which resides within (Keegan, 1994; Stoll, 1989). Stuart, Deckro and Mandle (1989) refer to spirit as a "spark" of the Divine

within an individual that gives life and dwells in the human heart. Fallding (1979) speaks of a universality that resembles the Holy Spirit and locates within the individual a life principle that is "identical with divinity itself" and is the "internalization of the ground with which the person is encircled" (p. 36). Macrae (1995) describes the spiritual philosophy of Nightingale as an expression of mysticism which includes a belief that all of creation shares the same inner divinity as a function of being rooted in the same spiritual reality.

The conceptualizations espoused by the aforenoted authors, of spirituality as immanent, are consistent with biblical proclamations, such as the interrogatory declaration of Paul the Apostle in his letter to the Corinthians when he writes "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?" (I Corinthians 3:16). Similar characterizations can be found in the Old Testament scriptures also, as when Micah declares, "I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord" (Micah 3:8). Renetzky (1979) asserts that it is the power *within* an individual that provides meaning, purpose, and fulfillment; for Christians, he states, this power is God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, while for others, it may be a power within and beyond self. Immanence, although not explicitly stated, is strongly implied in many other articles referring to relationships concerning the human-God (god) dyad. Peck (1993) argues that immanence and transcendence, as related to human-divine relationships, ideally form a spiritual balance.

The failure to explicitly articulate a description of immanence, by some authors, leaves doubt as to whether it should be considered an essential characteristic of spiritual quiddity or merely as a contingent feature. It would seem that it must bear a contingent relationship to spirituality if atheistic positions are to be included, since it pertains specifically to divinity, within the context of spiritual dimensionality.

Relationships with others, often described as connections or interconnectedness, are frequently included as part of the spiritual dimension (Brewer, 1979; Burkhardt &

Nagai-Jacobson, 1994; Burns, 1989; Dorff, 1988; Ellis, 1980; Hungelmann et al., 1985; Younger, 1995). Heriot (1992) emphasizes that the spiritual self is defined through interpersonal interactions and, especially in the elderly, introspection and contemplation.

Hungelmann, Kenkel-Rossi, Klassen, and Stollenwerk (1985) conducted a grounded theory study to determine indicators of spiritual well-being in older adults. Although their initial sample was predominantly Christian, it quickly became apparent that non-Christians and atheists needed to be included, and further sampling was done to include these groups for purposes of contrast. The investigators identified six core categories which related either to person or to time; the categories were subsequently reduced to two themes: harmony and connection. Harmonious interconnectedness was determined to be the basic social process underlying spiritual dimensionality.

Buber (1970), a philosopher and theologian, views the spirit as the essential feature that separates humans from non-humans; the spirit has the power, or capacity, to enter into relationships. Relationships fall into two categories, I-Thou or I-It; I-Thou relationships are characterized by mutuality, unmediated presence, directness, intensity, and ineffability; I-It relationships involve a lack of mutuality and a subject-object relation. Buber (1970) describes spirituality as the power to enter openly and spontaneously into dynamic, unmediated I-Thou relationships with the Eternal Thou (God) or with another individual who is also open to the other. Spirituality is only manifest in I-Thou relationships and cannot exist in subjective-objective relationships which imply 'use' of the other.

Presence

Presence is a term that frequently arises in conjunction with interpersonal relationships; it is characteristic of the type of spiritual connection between individuals which reflects the close, intimate relation associated with the I-Eternal Thou relationship (Buber, 1970). It represents an attitude of humility, vulnerability, and openness which invites mutuality and intense sharing. Paterson and Zderad (cited in McKivergin &

Daubenmire, 1994) describe presence as "a mode of being available or open in a situation with the wholeness of one's unique individual being; a gift of self which can only be given freely, invoked or evoked" (p. 67). Five essential elements comprise the concept of presence, as elucidated by Fish and Shelly (cited in Carson, 1989), including listening, empathy, vulnerability, humility, and commitment. Listening is an active process of complete attendance to the visual and verbal cues of another, including subtle nuances and both implicit and explicit messages. Empathy and vulnerability involve vicarious experiencing of another's feelings and the ability to expose one's inner self to be experienced by another. Presence permits humble acceptance of self and others and the commitment to remain available to another as long as support is required, even when it becomes uncomfortable to do so. Individuals in relation must both be open to each other for a truly spiritual connection to occur.

Harpur (cited in Younger, 1995) refers to presence as a primordial closeness, or a sense of unity in a situation of fragmentation. It is the ability to set aside personal concerns and spontaneously demonstrate an openness and willingness to share of the self with another (Buber, 1970; Heriot, 1992; Lane, 1987; Walker, 1992; Younger, 1995) in an effort to overcome suffering (Burkhardt, & Nagai-Jacobson, 1994; Kreidler, 1984; Sims, 1987). Presence may be recognized within a variety of diverse epithets, such as genuine sharing (Webster, 1994), compassionate accompaniment (Taylor & Ferszt, 1990), mutuality (Dettmore, 1986; Hudson, 1988); 'being with' (Burkhardt, 1989, 1991), empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard (Flynn, cited in Walker, 1992), transpersonal caring (Watson, 1985), and hospitality (Lane, 1987).

Empathy is the ability to understand and accept individuals unconditionally; it is often described as a component of presence which is requisite for spiritual caring (Dickinson, 1975; Dunajski, 1994; Keegan, 1994; Watson, 1988). Hudson (1988) uses a theological perspective of 'person', which implies presence, as a form of community that develops between two or more individuals living in response to, and in

relationship with, each other. Regardless of the taxonomy employed, presence is essential to the formation of unmediated, spirit to spirit encounters, such as those described by Watson (1985, 1988) as transpersonal caring moments, which are characteristic of spiritual dimensionality.

Connections to nature, or the environment, are also frequently found in the literature, concerning spiritual dimensionality and well-being, and form a part of many of the definitions that have been provided previously. Connectedness to nature involves a significant, meaningful relationship, which may include a transcendent quality, that is demonstrated in respect for all life, an appreciation of the natural world, and in a sense of unity or oneness with the universe (Burkhardt, 1991; Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 1994; Christy & Lyon, 1979; Hungelmann et al., 1985; Karns, 1991; Stuart, Deckro & Mandle, 1989; Webster, 1994; Younger, 1995). Relationships to the natural world are especially evident in the 'earth spirituality' (Couture, 1994) displayed in Aboriginal culture and social systems, as discussed earlier.

Barker (1989), in a phenomenological study of spiritual well-being in 13 native Appalachian women, found that nature, or the natural environment, was an essential feature of spirituality for her informants. Connections to nature provided a sense of inclusion in the cosmos and enhanced the awareness of person-God relationships for the women; a sense of spiritual well-being was manifested in happiness and feelings of peace and contentment (Barker, 1989). Appreciating, respecting, and caring for the earth comprise the 'connectedness to nature' theme, identified by Burkhardt (1991) in her grounded theory study of spirituality among 12 adult women in Appalachia. Burkhardt (1991) identified strength, comfort, aliveness, and awakenings within the Self, as consequences of this sense of environmental connectedness.

Connections to the natural world overlap each of the other three relational aspects (God, or Ultimate Other, self, and others); these relationships cannot be entirely isolated, even for analytic purposes, since they frequently overlap into the other

relationships. Connections to the natural environment may precipitate contemplation of a cosmic connectedness, and other ultimate concerns, which are indicative of relationships with God, or a higher power, as found in Barker's (1989) study.

The human spirit, or essential self, as the fourth dimension of personhood, is necessarily concerned with integration and interiority, by definition. Many descriptions of spirituality, previously presented, refer to harmonious interconnections between God (however defined), others, nature, and self (Bourg, 1979; Brooke, 1987; Burkhardt, 1989, 1991; Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 1994; Byrne, 1985; Christy & Lyon, 1979; Dorff, 1988; Emblen, 1992; Highfield & Cason, 1983; Hungelmann et al., 1985; James & James, 1991; Labun, 1988; Moberg, 1979; Renetzky, 1979).

Lane (1987) describes four ways the "spirit in the world" manifests itself, including transcending, connecting, giving life, and being free. Transcending provides self with a sense of destination and development. Connecting demonstrates a desire to belong, or to form community, and secure personal identity within that community. Giving life is the urge to mature, transform, and make life better for others. Being free is the capacity to seek attitudinal and behavioural choices, even in the face of adversity or suffering.

Self-integration and a sense of harmony presuppose a level of self-knowledge which is constantly evolving and developing. According to Byrne (1985), Maslow believed that self-knowledge, in conjunction with maturation and life experience, prepares individuals for self-actualization. Self-actualization, self-love, and self-integration are characteristics of harmonious interconnectedness, as postulated by Burkhardt (1989). Hungelmann et al. (1985) credit self-harmony with faculties of intentionality, self-determination, valuing, acceptance, and the ability to ascribe meaning and express a positive attitude and satisfaction in life. Self has also been termed a source of inner strength, a means of coping, inner knowing, self-awareness, and inner resource (Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 1994; Burns, 1989; Dettmore, 1984;

Dickinson, 1975; Fulton, 1995; Heriot, 1992; Moberg, 1979; Reed, 1991; Renetzky, 1979; Soeken & Carson, 1987; Steeves & Kahn, 1987; Stoll, 1979; Younger, 1995).

Moberg (1979), a sociologist studying indicators of spiritual well-being, postulates that 'spiritual' refers to the inner resources of an individual, especially as the basic value, or central philosophy, around which life is organized; it is that which guides conduct, and includes the supernatural and immaterial aspects of human beings. The spiritual dimension provides a source of strength and a means of coping during periods of existential distress and is inclusive and consistent across theistic, agnostic, and atheistic philosophies (Moberg, 1979).

Reed (1991), a prolific nurse author in the area of spirituality, like Moberg, views spirituality as a resource for mental health and coping patterns in older adults. She states that the elderly have a broadened perspective of time; therefore, philosophical speculation pertaining to the imminent approach of death, and reflection on the meaning of one's life are uppermost concerns (Reed, 1991). Spiritual development, resolution of dissonance, and maintenance of hope assume greater significance in the face of increased vulnerability and the losses associated with aging; this is consistent with the integration versus despair psychosocial stage posited by Erikson. Concerning spirituality as an innate resource available to the elderly, Reed (1991) states:

> Healthy spirituality fosters a concern for others and self, a sense of meaning and enjoyment in life, commitment to purposes greater than the self, a sense of relatedness, and a means for moving through a debilitating sense of guilt, anger, and anxiety. (p. 17)

Lane (1987) articulates four activities of the human spirit which demonstrate its level of functioning; they include inward turning, surrendering, committing, and struggling. Inward turning is an introspective, contemplative process which reflects, evaluates, and projects life events; during crisis, the spirit turns inward and attempts to make sense of the individual's situation. Surrendering involves letting go and letting be; it is a recognition of transition, of leaving behind the old to begin anew. Committing is the capacity for attachment to another, and presupposes surrender. Struggling is an

integrative function that involves ascription of meaning, formation of connections, recognition of limitations, and acceptance of life and all of its experiences (Lane, 1987). These four activities of the spirit lead to increased levels of self-awareness and heightened interiority.

Bourg (1979), a sociologist, has examined the relationship between interiority and individuation as they relate to various spiritual traditions, and asserts:

> Spiritual well-being, it seems to me, is to be found and measured in terms of greater interiority, of acting rather than merely reacting, of being a source, an origin, an initiator. One might develop measures of "integrity" in which the emphasis would be on interiority, that is, being gathered rather than scattered. Moreover, the power to "complete" or to "perfect" what has been begun or has been done, half done, prevented, or perverted, is a peculiar power of the person who possesses heightened interiority. (p. 18)

Spiritual development has often been termed a journey of self-exploration and discovery (Keegan, 1994; Taylor & Ferszt, 1990; Webster, 1994), an unfolding life journey (Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 1994), an inward journey (James & James, 1991) as well as a developmental process, as described in earlier sections. Burkhardt (1989) suggests that 'spiriting' might more readily be employed to describe the *process* of the unfolding of mystery, and its corollary, self-actualization.

There appears to be two ways in which spiritual journeying is consciously begun, one is a gradual increasing awareness or 'awakening', and the other is a sudden crisis, precipitating distress, with its attendant need for turning inward. An awakening may be a gradual awareness that old ways of thinking, behaving, and viewing reality no longer fit (Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 1994; Carson, 1989; James & James, 1991; Keegan, 1994), or it may occur as a spontaneous spiritual experience of the numinous (Carson, 1989; Day, 1984), a peak experience (Campbell, 1988; Garrett, 1979; Stoll, 1989), or a depth experience (Burns, 1989). These experiences may also include elements of transcendence. Existential crises, such as illness, suffering, or threats to self may throw an individual into spiritual turmoil and initiate a process of introspection, reflection, and heightened interiority. Whether gradual, or sudden, spiritual development generally begins with a precipitating event (Burns, 1989; Carson, 1989; Day, 1984).

Jung (1973) is renowned for his attempt to reunite spirituality and psychology, and for his theory of symbolic images, or archetypes, of the unconscious. Part of the archetype of self is the 'shadow self'; it contains all of the negative aspects (emotions, behaviours, etc.) of the human personality that have been rejected by the phenomenal ego, yet that remain buried in the unconscious (Burnard, 1987; Jung, 1973; Younger, 1995). The processes of introspection and self-evaluation, which lead to increased self-awareness and integration, necessitate exploration of the shadow self; complete self-integration can only be achieved when the individual faces, accepts, and incorporates the shadow into self-identity (Burnard, 1987; Jung, 1973; Younger, 1995). According to Jung (1973), children learn about the archetypes from myths and fairytales; this is consistent with the developmental theories and mythological traditions which were presented earlier. I would submit that adults also can increase knowledge of character traits of self and others through images presented in mythology, poetry, and popular literature.

According to Jung, individuation is the goal of psychospiritual growth (Peck, 1993); it is the striving for uniqueness and autonomy (Bourg, 1979) and a sense of self-identity (Burnard, 1987), as described in the developmental context. Individuation presupposes self-awareness and may be preceded and precipitated by a sense of pointlessness, distress, or feeling of emptiness, a state labelled by Frankl, an 'existential vacuum' Burnard, 1987; Frankl, 1959). Individualism and interiority are paradoxical counterparts of self which must be balanced for personal harmony and self-integration.

Spirituality as Transcendence

The theme of transcendence appeared consistently throughout the literature as a primary constituent element of spirituality (Brewer, 1979; Burkhardt, 1989; Chapman, 1986; Emblen, 1992; Forbis, 1988; Haase et al., 1992; James & James, 1991; Karns, 1991; Keegan, 1994; Labun, 1988; Pilch, 1988; Piles, 1990; Reed, 1991; Salladay & McDonnell, 1989; Stuart, Deckro & Mandle, 1989; Watson, 1988; Webster, 1994; Williams, 1991; Widerquist, 1991). Transcendence is a moving beyond, or surpassing

of, the usual limitations or boundaries of self. It has been described as transcendent energy (Stuart, Deckro & Mandle, 1989), being transported to another reality (Labun, 1988), the ability to go beyond self (Ellison, 19183; Haase et al., 1992; Widerquist, 1991), and pushing beyond the present situation (Brewer, 1979). Transcendence is the ability to give of oneself without loss to oneself (Frankl, 1959). It is transcendence that permits communion with someone or something beyond self.

Within the body of literature examined, transcendence appeared in two implicit forms, existential and metaphysical; the form of transcendence described was determined by the object of the relationship. As such, it is related to the horizontal and vertical planes of connectedness which have been described. Self-transcendence may be confined to interpersonal relationships and to relationships with the natural world (existential transcendence), or may include intra- and transpersonal relationships with the divine (metaphysical transcendence). Whether transcendence occurs on an existential or a metaphysical plane is influenced by the underlying worldview of the conceiver, or the individual's hermeneutic horizon; however, the consequent sensation of either a numinous or an existential transcendent experience is one of unity and harmony. The experience, however defined, serves to foster a sense of relational connectedness that dissolves time and lifts one temporarily out of time and place.

Lane (1987) and Reed (1987, 1991) have described transcendence as an extension of self-boundaries inwardly, outwardly, and temporally, and Younger (1995) adds that it places an individual closer to their transpersonal source of meaning (personal deity) within the larger landscape. Eversole and Hess (cited in Stoll, 1989) state that peak experiences and self-transcendence are what gives meaning to life; they need not reflect metaphysics and can be found in everyday, quotidian events, just as Brewer (1979) and Moore (1992) have suggested. Peak experiences generally involve intense feelings, such as awe, reverence, hate, fear, and love; they frequently occur in response to emotionally-charged precipitant life experiences and to developmental points of transition.

Some authors define self-transcendence as mysticism (Day, 1984), union with the greater cosmos (Fallding, 1979), and a response to mystery (Burkhardt, 1989; Peck, 1993; Reed, 1992); others subsume it under connectedness or relationships (Reed, 1992). Labun (1988) describes mystical experiences as expressions of spirituality which provide a sense of peaceful calm and utter fulfillment. Mystery is also implied in Tillich's definition of faith as an experience of being captured or grasped by the object of one's ultimate concern (Savramis, 1979). Transcendence, then, is an experience of mystical communion which expands boundaries, dissolves time, occurs in a relational context, and leads to a sense of fulfillment, meaning, and purpose to life, or self-actualization. Transcendence is a defining characteristic of spirituality as evidenced in all of the preceding contexts.

Spirituality as Meaning and Purpose in Life

The search for purpose in life, and the ascription of meaning to events and experiences, have consistently been identified as the primary functions of spiritual dimensionality. The inability to find meaning in one's life and circumstances leads to loss of spirit, or spiritual distress (Burnard, 1987; Frankl, 1959; Kreidler, 1984). Frankl (1959), a holocaust survivor and psychiatrist, describes spirituality as a search for the meaning of existence; he states that this "striving to find meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man" (p. 104). His psychospiritual therapeutic method, known as logotherapy, is based on the revelation of the human spirit through this "will-to-meaning"; it emphasizes the human spiritual propensity to transcend physical or psychic suffering and adverse circumstance through the indomitable freedom of the spirit to choose how an individual will respond to those conditions (Frankl, 1959). Spiritual activities, including creative action, experiencing of something or someone, and rising above and going beyond, or transcending, experiences of unavoidable suffering are three methods of attaining meaning in life which are articulated by Frankl (1959). These activities of the spirit correspond with the three critical attributes of spirituality that have been identified to this point; they include

characteristics of integrative energy, relationship formation, and self-transcendence which lead to meaning in life and spiritual actualization.

Trice (1990) conducted a phenomenological study of 11 elderly individuals (65-87 years of age) to identify the elements of an experience from which the elderly derive a sense of meaningfulness to life as a manifestation of the spirit. She concluded that each experience of meaning included a concern for others, helpfulness, action, and positiveness; notions of God or a higher power, and church, were frequently, but not consistently, identified (Trice, 1990). Once again, energy or activity, relationships, and transcendence are implicit in the ascription of meaning.

The ability to invest life with meaning provides a 'zest' for living (Byrne, 1985), confidence (Fallding, 1979), and enhances spiritual well-being (Burnard, 1987; Moberg, 1979); it provides individuals with the "capacity to live a life without being knocked off the rails" (Fallding, 1979, p. 40). Satisfaction with life and acceptance of the fullness of life's experiences (positive and negative) are consequences of the ability to find meaning in one's spiritual journeying across the lifespan (Heriot, 1992; Hungelmann et al., 1985).

Meaning and purpose to life and self-actualization, or fulfillment, have been revealed as the principle outcomes of spirituality in the contemporary theoretical context. Associated outcomes of spirituality have been discussed throughout this section; they are often identified as empirical referents in instruments used to measure spirituality and it seems appropriate to group them together and note them as indicators of human spirituality. They include love, joy, peace, trust, forgiveness, self-esteem, hope, inner strength, satisfaction, acceptance, fulfillment, vibrancy, and harmony.

Spirituality and Nursing Theory

The importance of a spiritual dimension to human nature and personhood has been widely accepted as an element of holistic nursing practice with the potential to promote health and facilitate healing; as such, it is increasingly being addressed in nursing theory. Travelbee (1971) focuses on spirituality as it relates to illness and

suffering and emphasizes nursing interventions that will assist individuals in their search for meaning within their subjective experience.

Fish and Shelly (1978) state that individuals must enter into a dynamic and personal relationship with God before they can begin to enjoy harmonious relationships, marked by happiness and peace, with self and others. Therefore, the key to total biological, psychological, spiritual, and social integration lies in the maintenance of a healthy person-God (god) relationship. Failure to achieve a relationship with God (however defined) leads to internal disharmony and discordant relationships with others. These authors claim that the spiritual dimension consists of a sense of meaning and purpose in life, a means of forgiveness, and a source of love and relatedness. Rogers (1980) employed systems theory to describe individuals as irreducible energy fields in constant interaction with the irreducible energy field of the environment; the notion of spirituality as an integrative energy source is implicit in this conceptualization of human nature.

Neuman (1989) describes individuals as a composite of five variables, one of which is spiritual; she states that spirituality may be "elusive, inexplicable, or merely philosophical, but because it creates order out of chaos, sense out of madness, or harmony out of disharmony, it is indispensable in nursing care" (p. 150). Orem (1985) suggests that spiritual experiences contribute to subjective perceptions of existential well-being; expressions of spiritual well-being may be manifested even in situations of extreme adversity.

Roy's adaptation model has recently been expanded to include the moral-ethical-spiritual self as an aspect of the self-concept mode. The moral-ethical-spiritual self is related to psychosocial adaptation and includes both psychological and spiritual components of personhood. It encompasses the individual's value and belief system and performs a self-evaluative function which strives for unity, or psychic integrity (Andrews, 1991).

Although Newman (1986) does not explicitly refer to spirituality, her theory of

health as expanding consciousness leads to an ultimate state of absolute consciousness, characterized by unconditional love, which resembles Peck's final "mystical/communal" psychospiritual stage and Fowler's final stage of universalizing faith, discussed in the developmental context. Each of these final developmental stages embraces paradox and results in the resolution of dissonance and the awareness of an ultimate unity.

These theories all reveal an inherent assumption of developmentalism as a gestalt process of increasing differentiation, or a journey of spiritual discovery, that requires integrative energy to facilitate an evolution towards wholeness. In all cases, spirituality occurs over time through life experiences and maturation.

Summary

The vast body of contemporary literature provided a wide variety of diverse conceptualizations of spiritual dimensionality. Two major sources of conflict and conceptual confusion were identified in the ambiguity evidenced in proponent and opponent opinions concerning amalgamation or separation of the spiritual and psychological dimensions, and in the synonymous use of the terms religion, or religiosity, and spirituality. Psychological and spiritual dimensional boundaries overlap as a function of the historical and sociocultural influences previously discussed; since spirituality is manifested through the psychosocial realm, dimensional distinction remains elusive and differentiation may depend on the relational subject. Psychological knowledge and skills were found to be prerequisite to development of spiritual maturity in accordance with developmental theory. Religion, although related to spirituality, is a distinctly different concept; it provides a contextual framework for spiritual relationships and bears a contingent relationship to spirituality. Examples of theoretical positions and research results concerning empirical referents, or indicators, of spirituality were presented, as well as consensual statements regarding its universal nature and proposed integrative, relational, and transcendent functions; additionally, catalytic forces and consequent outcomes were also discussed. Conceptualizations of human spirituality are dependent upon individual subjective experiences and relate to metaphysical (vertical

relationship with God, however defined) and/or existential (horizontal relationships with others, self, nature/environment) planes of relationship.

Numerous themes were revealed within the contemporary theoretical context, including: an integrative energy process; relationships to God (god), others, self and nature (environment); transcendence; immanence; purpose/meaning in life; a process or journey; and self-actualization. Personal moral values and ethical standards were identified as a function of conjunctive interaction between subjective spiritual experience and an individual's hermeneutic horizon; collective spiritual experiences and values were encoded and embedded within religious rituals and rules of conduct as a function of social, cultural, and religious organization. Faith, as a related concept of spirituality, was discussed and found to be a requisite element of spiritual development. Finally, current conceptualizations of spiritual dimensionality in contemporary nursing theories were also noted. Thematic analysis of contemporary theoretical and research literature revealed findings that are consistent with previously discussed contextual abstractions.

The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?

Proverbs 18:14

The Illness Context

Illness, especially chronic and terminal illness, suffering, and impending death may precipitate an existential crisis and extreme spiritual distress, yet struggling and suffering may also provide potential opportunities for spiritual actualization. Frankl (1959) stresses that the freedom of the human spirit to transcend suffering (will-to-meaning) leads to discovery of meaning in the most adverse of circumstances; he states that, "In some way, suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning" (p. 117). The meaning an individual ascribes to illness and suffering is often inexorably linked to the particular faith tradition (theistic or atheistic) with which s(he) is affiliated; additionally, socioreligious, cultural, developmental, and experiential factors influence attachment of meaning and spiritual development or perspective. For example, the Judaic tradition is based on a covenant-relationship of promise and threat, related to laws and commands; consequently, suffering through illness may be viewed as just punishment for some transgression (Bowker, 1970). Since the body belongs to God, and is merely on loan to the individual, God can make demands on its use (Dorff, 1988); failure to perform this religious duty and abide by the rules of the covenant may lead to illness, suffering, or death (Bowker, 1970). Suffering, if conceptualized in this manner, can serve a redemptive function and lay the foundation for better things in the future; although understanding of God's design for humanity remains beyond human comprehension, the individual trusts that suffering has meaning (Bowker, 1970).

Within the Christian tradition, Christ's conquest of suffering and death leads to new life; therefore, suffering and death are important aspects of an individual's identification with Christ (Bowker, 1970). Bowker (1970) points to scripture for support, particularly to the Lord's response to Paul, in his plea to be released from

suffering, that "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12: 8); Paul subsequently writes:

> Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. (2 Corinthians 12: 9-10)

According to Bowker (1970), to the extent that an individual identifies with Christ, through suffering, s(he) will receive consolation, comfort, strength, fortitude, and hope in return. Just as Christ suffered, individuals suffer; it must be an ineluctable condition of life. Perfection of spirit, then, can only be achieved through suffering, whether the cause is understood or remains incomprehensible. Consequently, within the Judaic and Christian contexts, suffering, through illness, adversity, and death, has the potential to effect spiritual development.

The influence of conceptualizations of God (gods), during periods of illness and suffering, is also clearly evidenced in Aboriginal cultural traditions, especially in the ceremonial rites of purification, atonement rituals, vision quests, and ethnomedical practices. As this material has been articulated in a previous section, it will not be elaborated upon further at this point. The reader is invited to return to the Aboriginal cultural context section for added information.

The image of God (god, or Ultimate Other) that an individual develops over the lifespan, whether part of a specific religious tradition or not, will affect attitudes, behaviours, and decisions expressed during periods of existential crisis; confronted by inescapable suffering (biophysical, psychological, or spiritual) or impending death of self or loved one(s), the spirit will invoke the familiar conceptualization of God (god), as understood by the individual (DeCrane, 1994). If God (however defined) is envisioned as judgmental and punishing, the person may react with fear and feel hopeless or abandoned; if, however, God (god) is conceived of as accepting, personal, and in control of the situation, feelings of hope, peace, and courage will result (Stoll, 1979). Ferszt and Taylor (1990) suggest that deliberate invocation of a positive image

of God (however defined), such as being surrounded by a loving reality or presence, has a therapeutic effect on the individual. Images of God (god) may remain a part of the unconscious horizon of an individual during periods of relative stability and yet still function, at the unconscious level, as a measure against which personal moral decisions are made and weighed (DeCrane, 1994). Consequently, conscious recognition and fostering of positive images of God (god) can be expected to significantly influence an individual's response to illness and suffering. Images of God (god) can be extrapolated to all vertical relationships, thereby encompassing humanistic and materialistic ideologies, when they are conceptualized as ultimate values such as love, serenity, justice, joy, harmony, peace or unity.

Acute illness, despite being a source of existential stress, represents, primarily, a transitory threat; its severity, potential consequences, level of suffering, and degree of incapacitation, will determine its stimulant effect on spiritual perspective. Although the power of acute illness to produce major metamorphic change is recognized, it frequently either resolves or progresses on to become a serious life threat. Spontaneous resolution of acute illness precludes spiritual crisis, and progression to a crisis state permits acute illness to be subsumed under a category of potential terminal illness. Consequently, the effects of acute illness on spiritual dimensionality, as a function of its transitory nature, will not be discussed further at this juncture due to the time and space constraints imposed by this project.

Chronic Illness

As a non-normative and unpleasant life event, the onset of chronic illness represents a crisis situation for an individual. The inner resources of the individual, the social support network, and the meaning ascribed to the critical event (consequent outcomes of spiritual development), can all be considered mediating factors which influence an individual's response to the existential crisis, as suggested by the foregoing discussions. The crisis precipitated by a diagnosis of chronic illness results in disrupted self-integration and disharmony; feelings of anger, despair, depression, grief, and

anxiety are common and may lead to a sense of hopelessness or powerlessness (Soeken & Carson, 1987). Adaptation to chronic illness is a dynamic process requiring periods of reorganization (to symptoms and treatment regimen) and resolution (acknowledgment of losses and redefinition of roles and expectations) as the illness progresses (Soeken & Carson, 1987). Individuals, perhaps for the first time, are faced with personal vulnerability and possible mortality, causing them to consider questions of ultimacy and the issues of deepest concern in life (Dickinson, 1975; Kreidler, 1984; Soeken & Carson, 1987; Stoll, 1979). It is at this point, paradoxically, that illness becomes a spiritual encounter (Roche, 1989; Soeken & Carson, 1987). The following theoretical and research examples illustrate the interplay between spirituality and chronic illness.

Roche (1989) presents a description of the progressive diminution of physical strength as a series of disconnections which occur in individuals with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. She emphasizes the infinite potential for growth inherent in the paradox associated with physical deterioration and the increased possibility of spiritual development. Roche (1989) stresses the need for experiences of connectedness to maintain a sense of unity with God, others, and self as bodily disconnectedness progresses. Often, emotional turmoil and a sense of powerlessness are evident in the individual and extend to the family, leading to social withdrawal and alienation; consequently, spiritual connectedness and self-integration are paramount concerns for these individuals.

Fulton (in press) also describes the feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and powerlessness felt by individuals undergoing renal dialysis and suggests that spiritual care is requisite to personal resolution and the re-integration of self in chronic illness. Fulton (in press) cites intra-, inter-, and extra-personal stressors as the factors which precipitate spiritual crisis and discusses potential interventions for providing spiritual care within the context of the Neuman systems model.

Thomas (1989) has co-developed, with Lynch, a unique treatment for hypertension, known as transactional psychophysiology. Psychophysiology therapy

uses computer assisted monitoring of blood pressure and heart rate to teach biofeedback responses to clients during therapeutic dialogue. Once learned, during the second phase, more stressful topics are explored in a context of monitored communication and finally, spirituality is introduced in phase three. Spirituality is described as an openness to a power beyond self and an awareness of inner peace as inherent aspects of a search for purpose in life. Traditional religious practices, specific to the client's expressed preference, are introduced during this phase to mediate the stress response and calm the inner self, thereby enhancing self re-integration.

Each of the preceding authors describes elements of relational or transcendental breakdown associated with chronic illness that lead to feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness, and experiences of existential suffering. The initial negative reaction to a diagnosis of chronic illness may then initiate turning inward, spiritual struggling, and an intensified search for meaning in an effort to alleviate or ameliorate suffering. The aforenoted authors have all described feelings of hopelessness, or the need for hope, as one consequence of chronic illness; as this is an important, and commonly identified, element of all discussions of spiritual suffering, it is appropriate to consider the concept of hope at this point.

Hope

Hope is frequently linked with (and occasionally substituted for) spirituality in the literature despite its readily distinguishable nature. Hope is described by Carson (1989) as the anticipation of a future, potentially achievable goal, and Mickley et al. (1992) suggest that hope is the possibility of, and confidence in, an expected future outcome. Stoll (1979, 1989) states that hope is an integral feature of spirituality that is grounded in relationships of trust and mutuality. Hope may enhance spirituality (Burns, 1989) and, together with an individual's will to live, promote better adaptation to illness, thereby improving survival and recovery prognoses (Ross, 1994). Hope and faith are also viewed as essential to coping during periods of life-threatening illness and when individuals are suffering *in extremis* (Fulton, 1995; Reed, 1992); consequently, hope is

often a vital and significant influence in healing. Without hope, individuals may lapse into despair.

Soeken and Carson (1987) posit four innate features of conceptualizations of hope: an orientation towards the future; the setting of goals; an action component directed towards meeting the identified goals; and the establishment of interpersonal relationships. Hope possesses vertical and horizontal components, similar to spirituality, in that relationships are formed upwards towards God, or a higher power, or laterally, towards others and nature (Carson, 1989). Vertically-directed hope is also referred to as Ultimate hope and is oriented towards eternal goals, actions, and a divine relationship (Soeken & Carson, 1987); however, hope can also be oriented towards earthly goals, actions, and relationships (Carson, 1989). Since these two viewpoints may coexist and are not mutually exclusive positions, hope may be considered from theistic or atheistic, spiritual or material, perspectives.

Haase et al. (1992), performed a simultaneous concept analysis of spirituality, hope, acceptance, and self-transcendence; they describe the essential elements of hope as including: a future orientation; energized action; a general or specific goal that acts as a motivator; and sensations of uncertainty or uneasiness. Although the similarity to spirituality is striking, there are certain distinguishing characteristics. Development of both spirituality and hope appears to be preceded by some form of critical incident, involve energy processes, focus on relationships and share an outcome of peace. However, a primary distinguishing feature is the orientation towards time; hope is characterized as anticipatory, with a future orientation, whereas spirituality is oriented towards the individual's present condition. Outcomes of spiritual development include a sense of meaning or purpose in life and a determination of personal ethical-moral values which are uncharacteristic of hope. Consequences of hope include either attainment, or non-attainment, of the identified specific or general goal. Although Haase et al. (1992) identify self-transcendence as a consequence of spirituality and hope, I would submit that this is inconsistent with, or at least inconclusive from, the overwhelming evidence

in the literature. Self-transcendence appears to be a defining characteristic, rather than a consequence, of spirituality. The anticipatory nature of hope presupposes antecedent life experiences and awareness of potential consequences; these features are not requisite to spiritual development. Additionally, the sense of unease which is associated with hope may also be absent in spiritual experiences. Deliberate setting of goals requires a cognitive orientation that is antithetical to the subjective, unmediated, experiential nature of spirituality. The differences between these related concepts may now be more evident in the following definitions. Hope is defined as "an energized mental state involving feelings of uneasiness or uncertainty and characterized by a cognitive, action-oriented expectation that a positive future goal or outcome is possible" (Haase et al., 1992, p. 143). Spirituality is defined as "an integrating and creative energy based on belief in, and a feeling of interconnectedness with, a power greater than self" (Haase et al., 1992, p. 143).

Terminal Illness

A diagnosis of terminal illness not only precipitates a spiritual crisis, but forces an individual to confront questions of ultimacy and personal finitude. Although responses will vary in accordance with each individual's unique hermeneutic horizon, the inherent features of the response pattern are similar to those of individuals diagnosed with chronic illness except, perhaps, in their intensity and the rapidity with which death approaches. The initial shock, and subsequent crisis, which is generated by a realization of existential finitude and the presumption of imminent death, creates a state of anticipatory grief, with its attendant sensations of conflict, loneliness, guilt, and meaninglessness, and results in existential suffering (Imara, 1975; Younger, 1995). Inward turning and social withdrawal are characteristic of suffering individuals, particularly in the immediate crisis period, and may lead to feelings of alienation. Younger (1995), like Frankl (1959), asserts that the choice made by an individual faced with intolerable suffering will determine the nature of the suffering experience and its effect on the person's spiritual perspective.

Alienation, according to Younger (1995), is an experience or feeling of relational disconnectedness from God (god), others, self, or nature; consequently, it can be described as a state of spiritual estrangement from one's sources of transcendent power. Younger (1995) suggests that alienation is an antonym for connectedness and views both concepts as polar attributes of a continuum on which each step reflects a degree of separation from essential relationships. As an individual progresses along the continuum towards greater levels of connectedness, self-integration, harmony, and a sense of community gradually increase (Younger, 1995). Reestablishing relationships to sources of transcendent power demonstrates increasing levels of spiritual integration.

Frank (1991) emphasizes the heightened need of individuals with terminal illnesses to build and maintain relationships in all their aspects; he states:

> To be ill, to share in the suffering of being human is to know your place in that whole, to know your connection with others. For the person who is dying, being with others expresses that connection, which alone has value and restores proportion. (p. 121)

Imara (1975) describes a sequential progression through several stages, from crisis to acceptance, in terminally ill individuals, using Kubler-Ross's five stages of grief; he emphasizes that individuals may get "stuck" in any one stage and be unable to accept their diagnosis and prognostic outcome. Individuals who achieve a measure of acceptance share characteristics of being able to share deeply about their experience with others (mutuality and presence) and acceptance of life in all its fullness (situational transcendence); they have a framework within which they can ascribe meaning to life and thereby attain a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction (Imara, 1975). Frank (1991), Kubler-Ross (1975), and Younger (1975) all agree that individuals must accept their personal finitude in order to learn to live life fully in the process of dying. Burns (1989) proposes that the attributes of presence and transcendence, as implied above, could be subsumed by the concept harmonious interconnectedness, a term coined by Hungelmann et al.

Steeves and Kahn (1987) examined the transcendent experiences, or experiences

of meaning, which occurred spontaneously in response to extreme physical suffering, mental anguish, or anticipatory grieving as described by several hospice patients and their family members. They discovered a frequently recurring motif wherein particular quotidian events precipitated an unexpected, unmediated experience of communion with a force greater than self. Each of the transcendent moments was closely associated with periods of extreme existential suffering and contained two essential features: suffering seemed to be temporarily lifted, and there was a feeling of communion with a greater force(s) (Steeves & Kahn, 1987). These critical incidents subsequently altered each individual's mode of experiencing reality and transformed their perceptions of suffering, thereby providing a sense of peace and contentment (Steeves & Kahn, 1987). Although spirituality was not expressly identified, its presence is implied in the descriptions of transcendent, meaningful experiences and relationships with a greater force.

Conrad (1985) describes spirituality in the context of terminal illness from both theistic and atheistic perspectives; she states that imminent death often precipitates an inward journey to contemplate matters of ultimacy. This view is reminiscent of Lane's (1987) 'inward turning' and Bourg's (1979) emphasis on heightened interiority, as previously discussed. Spiritual needs of the terminally ill include an ongoing quest for meaning, a sense of forgiveness, hope, and feelings of reciprocal love, although each need may be experienced with varying degrees of intensity (Conrad, 1985). Even as death nears, individuals must continue to create personal meaning in an effort to integrate the transitional experience of dying with their personal value and belief system (Conrad, 1985); the same process of meaning ascription is engaged in during periods of extreme crisis and suffering. The degree to which forgiveness (from self or others) can be accepted is determined by the image of God (however defined) that an individual has developed over time; images of God (god) are influenced by parents, culture, significant figures, social factors, and stages of psychosocial, moral, and spiritual development (Conrad, 1985; DeCrane, 1994). The need for hope is also manifest in terminal illness. Hope is a dichotomous concept which is composed of concrete and abstract dimensions.

Concrete hope focuses on objects or states within the realm of personal experience, such as physical ability or freedom from pain, while abstract hope, or transcendent hope, focuses on matters of ultimacy, such as the possibility of an afterlife, energy release, or establishing a legacy of memory in family (Conrad, 1985).

The aforenoted theoretical descriptions of spiritual dimensionality, in the context of terminal illness, demonstrate several recurring characteristics, or motifs. Although most research concerning the spiritual dimension has focused primarily on gerontological populations and individuals with chronic or terminal illnesses, the results appear to substantiate the themes revealed in the theoretical literature, as evidenced by the following select examples.

Millison and Dudley (1992) surveyed 117 hospice workers to determine the approaches used to assist patients with their spiritual or religious needs; they concluded that the spiritual approaches identified were based on traditional religious practices. Humanistic interventions were infrequent and, despite self-reported professions of the importance placed on spiritual dimensionality, some professional caregivers preferred to delegate spiritual matters to clergy, rather than to provide spiritual care themselves; however, many hospice professionals did assist patients with spiritual concerns. Wald and Bailey (1990) assert that "Dying is more than a biological occurrence. It is a human, social, and spiritual event" (p. 66); they present a list of assumptions and principles underlying the provision of spiritual care, within a context of terminal illness, that can be used to develop interventions aimed at meeting spiritual needs during the dying process, and clearly recognize the importance of essential relationships. Thompson (1994) also stresses the maintenance of connections with friends and loved ones to fortify the dying person's spiritual resources and provide a meaningful experience with dying.

Mickley, Soeken and Belcher (1992) attempted to clarify the concept of 'spiritual health' by assessing the roles of spiritual well-being, religiosity, and hope in a survey of 175 women with breast cancer. Instruments employed for conceptual analysis included

the Spiritual Well-Being Scale, designed by Paloutzian and Ellison, to determine measures of religious and existential well-being, the Nowatny Hope Scale, and Feagin's Intrinsic/Extrinsic Religiousness Scale. They concluded that individuals classified as intrinsically religious reported higher levels of spiritual well-being than those with an extrinsic religious orientation. Research findings demonstrated a positive correlation between hope and spiritual well-being, with existential well-being being the principle contributing element of hope.

Carson and Green (1992) studied the relationship between hardiness and spiritual well-being in 100 subjects who tested positive for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or who were diagnosed with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) or AIDS-related complex (ARC). The study used the Spiritual Well-Being Scale and the Personal Views Survey, which measures hardiness, and concluded that spiritual well-being, especially the component of existential well-being, predicted hardiness in these individuals.

Kaczorowski (1989) investigated the relationship between anxiety and spiritual well-being in a correlational study of 114 adults diagnosed with cancer. The instruments used included the Spiritual Well-Being Scale to measure religious and existential well-being and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory to measure levels of transitory and characteristic anxiety. Research conclusions demonstrated a consistent inverse relationship between levels of state-trait anxiety and spiritual well-being, supporting the hypothesis that persons with high levels of spiritual well-being have lower levels of anxiety.

Highfield (1992) investigated the spiritual health of oncology patients and the ability of oncology nurses to assess spiritual health using Spiritual Health Inventories. Findings revealed moderately high levels of spiritual health despite the existential crisis precipitated by a cancer diagnosis; however, the study results indicate that nurse respondents were inaccurate in their assessments of patients' spiritual health. Additionally, younger patients and those with greater symptomatology reported lower

levels of spiritual well-being than older patients or those with fewer physical symptoms. These findings support the literature on suffering and life cycle perspectives; spiritual actualization requires introspection, reflective contemplation, and developmental maturity, which occur over time. Consequently, older nurses with more life experience could reasonably be expected to have an increased potential ability to recognize spiritual needs in patients, as a consequence of interacting developmental influences.

Reed (1987) conducted a study to investigate spiritual well-being among terminally ill adults. She examined three matched groups of 100 adults classified as terminally ill hospitalized, non-terminally ill hospitalized, and healthy non-hospitalized individuals, using the Spiritual Perspective Tool, the Index of Well-Being, a perceived health rating, and open-ended questions. The results supported the hypothesis that terminally ill hospitalized adults demonstrated greater levels of spiritual well-being than both the non-terminally ill hospitalized and healthy non-hospitalized groups. This is consistent with the theoretical opinions above that indicate the need to face personal finitude before being able to move through spiritual crisis.

Belcher, Dettmore and Holzemer (1989), interviewed 35 persons with AIDS to determine their individual conceptualizations of spirituality. Analysis of the interviews revealed themes which supported definitions reported in the literature, including, connectedness to other individuals, a belief system that provides a framework for querying eschatological concerns, transcendence of personal boundaries, alterations in intensity of relationships with a higher power, and the importance of social support. This study demonstrates the potential for spiritual growth even during periods of existential crisis.

Themes abstracted from the research reports are consistent with those revealed in the body of theoretical literature and emphasize the importance of relationships, transcendent experiences, existential well-being, an evolutionary integrative process, and heightened interiority. Investigations of spiritual dimensionality are relatively sparse and have focused primarily on the elderly and/or infirm; consequently, additional

studies are crucial to increased understanding, conceptual verification, and operational isomorphism.

Chronic and Terminal Illness in Children

Children with chronic and terminal illness present a special case for discussion since their responses may differ substantially from the expected range of adult responses. Expressions concerning the spiritual dimension will be constrained by a number of different factors, including cognitive, psychosocial, moral, and spiritual stages of developmental maturity. The images of God (god) upon which a child relies may not be clearly defined, as a function of interacting maturational, social, and cultural influences, as were discussed previously within the developmental context.

Imminent death, for a child and/or their family, precipitates a devastating spiritual crisis that results in extreme disequilibrium and spiritual disharmony (Winkelstein, 1989). Although a diagnosis of terminal illness most profoundly affects the immediate family, its repercussions diffuse outwards and affect all familial and external social relationships and interactions. Four common responses to death, which have been identified in children, include fear, depression, guilt, and anger; these responses relate to the spiritual needs for love, hope, forgiveness, and meaning, which are essential for human integrity and well-being (Winkelstein, 1989).

The development of a concept of death in children is related to cognitive and psychosocial levels and involves a three-stage developmental process, according to Nagy's theory (Winkelstein, 1989). In the first stage (3-5 years), children deny the finality of death and view it as a temporary state, similar to sleep. In the second stage (5-9 years), death is personified ("death man" images) and viewed as a permanent state. In the third and final stage (over 9 years of age), children recognize death as universal, inevitable, and personal. Although studies have been conducted using this theory, the results have been inconclusive; Nagy's theory has been criticized for its failure to account for social, cultural, religious, and experiential backgrounds (Winkelstein, 1989). One critic of Nagy's theory, Bluebond-Langner, insists that a terminally ill

child's conceptualization of death will vary from that of a normal child of similar age as a function of information acquisition and a changing self-concept related to the disease process (Winkelstein, 1989).

Kubler-Ross (1975) and Frank (1991) emphasize the importance of early childhood experiences with death, and/or the reaction of parents and other significant figures to death, as mediators of individual childrens' responses to the death and dying process. Frank (1991) suggests that a seriously or terminally ill child senses that s(he) is different and represents a source of discomfort to family, friends, and other significant figures; feelings of alienation and isolation ensue and social withdrawal is a common response to the perceived reactions of others. Voluntary withdrawal will occur even in the absence of overt expressions of rejection by others. Frank (1991) asserts that the withdrawn child acts in response to cues from others; therefore, (s)he reflects the perceived attitudes of others and tries to disappear in order to reduce the levels of distress felt by others. Negative emotional responses often emanate from a sense of loss (associated with power, control, or hope) and reflect underlying spiritual needs, as identified. The result, for all involved, is suffering.

Isolation from loved ones and familiar surroundings, whether from voluntary social withdrawal, or lengthy periods of hospitalization, engenders feelings of alienation, powerlessness, and hopelessness in the child. (Frank, 1991; Kubler-Ross, 1975; Winkelstein, 1991). Although these feelings are similar to those of adults, inner spiritual resources, coping response patterns, and conceptualizations of God (god) and death are not well developed, as a result of the limitations imposed by developmental level, and will affect behavioural responses to serious illness or impending death. The resultant spiritual disorganization and disharmony represents disrupted relationships (God, others, self, and nature), separation from transcendent sources of power, and an increased need to find meaning in life.

The paucity of articles concerning spirituality in childhood suggests that this is not presently an area of major concern; however, the significant population of children

with chronic and terminal illnesses indicates that perhaps spiritual concerns of children are not well represented and must command greater scope and emphasis. Fulton and Moore (in press), in an article describing spiritual care of the school age child with a chronic condition, suggest that chronic illness interferes with the child's emerging identity and self-concept and can lead to depression, isolation, helplessness, and feelings of inferiority and inadequacy. The physical instability and emotional uncertainty inherent in chronic illness, and the constant requirements for adaptation, modify the child's lifestyle and have a negative influence on activities that promote a sense of competence and self-worth (Fulton & Moore, in press). Changes in activity tolerance and self-identity affect intra- and interpersonal relationships and challenge the child to find meaning to existence; fear, depression, and isolation may result (Fulton & Moore, in press). Religious or humanist family perspectives, sociocultural factors, and developmental level will determine the child's response, and subsequent spiritual actualization, to this existential crisis, whether influences operate at a conscious or an unconscious level.

Summary

Chronic and terminal illnesses place tremendous demands on human spiritual reserves and can significantly impact spiritual perspective and evolution. Judaic, Christian, and Aboriginal religiospiritual traditions identify suffering as an ineluctable condition of human existence that provides a means to achieve spiritual perfection. Images of God (god, deity, or Ultimate Other), developed during the maturational processes, inhere all individuals and are held at a conscious, or an unconscious, level, thereby inexorably influencing responses to existential crisis, suffering, and impending death. Disrupted self-integration, disharmony, and negative emotional reactions are characteristic initial response patterns to chronic and terminal illness and may lead to feelings of alienation, social withdrawal, and a sense of powerlessness or hopelessness. Adaptation to exacerbations, remissions, or the approach of death, requires reorganization of lifestyle, resolution of grief and loss, redefinition of roles and

expectations, and acceptance of prognostic outcome. Spiritual well-being in chronic and terminal illness cannot be fully attained until an individual confronts personal finitude and accepts life in all its fullness. Until such stages are achieved, the need to search for meaning in life remains intense and relationships with others are jeopardized; consequently, spiritual dimensionality is disrupted. Inner personal resources and social support from others are essential facets of spiritual re-integration during periods of existential crisis.

Children with chronic or terminal illness are subjected to similar pressures and are also prone to spiritual disorganization and distress; however, expected response patterns may differ substantively as a function of interacting maturational, sociocultural, and spiritual developmental factors. Conceptualizations of death range from denial of its finality, through personification, to recognition and acceptance of death as personal and permanent. The image of God (god) that is familiar to a child, although it may not be clearly defined, will influence behavioural responses to fear, depression, guilt, and anger, when the child is threatened with intractable suffering or death. The spiritual needs for love, hope, forgiveness, and meaning become pronounced and require that relationships and social support be maintained and strengthened. It is apparent that illness, suffering, and imminent death provide a context of constant threat for human spirituality, whether it is directed towards adults of children.

Conceptual analysis across the various illness contexts distinguished the related concepts of spirituality and hope, and revealed themes that are consistent with those found in the contemporary theoretical, developmental, Aboriginal, historical, and mythological contexts. Themes include: an emphasis on relationships with God (god), others, and self; an integrational energy source; transcendent power; struggling, or suffering, as part of spiritual journeying; and the quest to find meaning and purpose in life.

Chapter IV

All is mystery; but he is a slave who will not struggle to penetrate the dark veil.

Benjamin Disraeli

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research project was to analyze and synthesize the various conceptualizations and descriptions of spiritual dimensionality, using a hermeneutic approach, to increase understanding of the human spiritual dimension and to propose a clear and precise theoretical definition of human spirituality. This chapter begins with a discussion and summary of the influence that selected contexts have had on the development and evolution of conceptualizations of spirituality and follows with conclusions of the research findings and a conceptual model delineating the thematic structure of the spiritual dimension of human nature. Implications of the research conclusions for the nursing profession and recommendations for further research are also presented.

Summary of Findings

The goal of the study was to determine the essential characteristics and distinguishing features of spirituality as described within the theoretical and research literature of a variety of selected disciplines, as well as in popular literature, mythology, and poetry. Concept development techniques, including concept analysis, synthesis, and reconceptualization, were used to answer the research questions. Clarification of terminology surrounding the spiritual dimension and differentiation of 'spirituality' from related concepts, primarily linguistic tasks, were undertaken to examine ambiguities and inconsistencies inherent in much of the theoretical literature. Since the linguistic structures and patterns of a culture are socially constructed, meaning is contextually dependent (Ricoeur, 1981; Wilson, 1963) and is subject to change in accordance with

the socially pragmatic concerns of a particular culture or historical period. Therefore, prior to attempts at description and explication, it was essential to obtain a significant level of understanding of the phenomenon of spirituality in order to accurately assess its underlying meanings and critical attributes. Consequently, hermeneutic analysis, as advocated by Ricoeur (1981), was used to theoretically examine the concept. An historical analysis of the topic was also included to illustrate conceptual evolution across a variety of temporal periods. These steps were based on the guidelines for concept development and integrative literature reviews advanced by Walker and Avant (1988), Broome (1993), Cooper (1982), and Morse (1995).

Conceptualizations of spirituality were examined within the following selected contexts: Mythological and Poetic Literature; Historical; Aboriginal; Developmental Life Stages; Contemporary Theoretical; and Illness contexts. Each of these contexts will be briefly discussed in an attempt to summarize the consequent effects attributable to its influence on conceptual usage and evolution. Themes and characteristics of spirituality, as determined through conceptual development techniques, including concept analysis and synthesis, will also be presented.

The mythological literature of a culture encodes, preserves, and indefinitely represents its most deeply held social, moral, and religious values and beliefs. It refers to the sacred, shared vision that places individuals in relation with their natural and supernatural environments and provides a valuable source of knowledge and guidance; as such, it is a cultural interpretation of reality and history that remains contemporarily relevant as a function of its atemporal nature. Therefore, it follows that spirituality, as a central value and recognized phenomenon in all cultures, must be a prominent allegorical structure within traditional mythological structures. An examination of Judeo-Christian, Greek, Roman, Norse, various Aboriginal Indian, Inuit, and Contemporary cosmogenic myths revealed several themes that transcend all cultural and temporal boundaries.

Poetic exemplars also immortalize many of the highly prized concepts and beliefs of a culture, such as the importance of human spirituality and the sacredness of life, and

provide insightful glimpses into the underlying social values of greatest significance. Changing conceptualizations of spirituality were apparent in the poetic literature and coincided with the rapidly evolving philosophical and scientific worldviews. Although conceptualizations varied in accordance with the sociohistorical and political climates, the underlying themes were consistent with those of the mythological literature.

Dominant themes discovered in the context of mythological and poetic literature include: an animating, integrative life force; a relationship to God (god) or a supernatural deity; connections to others; harmonious interactions with nature or the environment; a process, or journey of discovery marked by adversity and struggle for survival, which culminates in death and a return to a spiritual existence; self-awareness; transcendence; and immanence.

The historical context provided perhaps the greatest evidence of cultural relevance and conceptual evolution. The early Greek 'psyche', or soul, was a psychospiritual complex with dual aspects of corporeality (sensation, or sensitive and emotional functions) and immaterialism (spiritual and intellectual functions). Spiritual functions were related to polytheistic socioreligious organizational structure and bore little resemblance to contemporary views. Immortality was not considered a characteristic of the soul since only the intellect was believed to survive death and dissolution of the body. Judaism may have exerted some influence on the Greek interpretation of the soul, as seen in the apparently monotheistic Platonic conceptualization which fell into disrepute during the rise of Aristotelianism. The advent of NeoPlatonism diminished Peripatetic authority and initiated a shift toward monotheism which produced a period of relative stability that lasted until the 12th century. Despite the undisputed Christian ecclesiastical hegemony of these centuries, psychospiritual ambiguity remained. The rise of neoclassicism led to a crisis in Christianity (as the immortality of the soul was once again questioned) and subsequently resulted in a syncresis of classical philosophy and Christian theology. The irrevocable disjunction of philosophy and science, a consequence of Cartesianism, began a diversification of philosophies which eventually

gave rise to humanism, material monism, idealism, and moderate realism as a series of reactionary positions. Consequently, when assessing literature from these periods, one must bear in mind the evolutionary state of spirituality and remain cognizant of the conjunctive nature of the psychospiritual complex prior to the 17th century. Although the psychological and spiritual dimensions eventually became conceptually separated, some confusion has remained to the present. Additionally, during the Enlightenment period, spirituality was increasingly associated with theology and placed in opposition to scientific realism. Consequently, contemporary conceptual ambiguity concerning spiritual dimensionality has its origins in historical events and caution must be exercised when interpretations of spirituality are attempted from historical descriptions and contexts.

Themes that were consistently identified across historical epochs, with the qualified exemption of materialism for the moment, include: a relationship to God (god) or a metaphysical deity; relationships to others; connectedness to the natural world; an integrating energy process; transcendence; and immanence. Materialism permits recognition of an existential spirit and an energy source (neurological activity), within a monistic framework, but a metaphysical conceptualization of spirituality is precluded.

Traditional Native cultures failed to differentiate between spirituality and other aspects of daily life; health and well-being depended upon obligatory relationships with a host of supernatural deities and other living creatures (human, animal, and plant), in addition to self-control. Spiritual disharmony, or disequilibrium, was expressed by adversity and disease; and often necessitated shamanic consultation and intervention for the restoration of equilibrium.

Colonial expansionism greatly influenced the underlying spiritual unity of many Aboriginal cultural lifeways. Despite large numbers of religious conversions, some authors maintain that only superficial acquiescence and changes in overt religiospiritual practices were achieved. The despiritualization of Native social structure, and the relegation and compartmentalization of spiritual concerns to Western theology, occurred

as a consequence of European culture contact and Christian ecclesiasticism, and brought with it the attendant confusion of psychological, spiritual, and religious dimensional concepts. Additionally, the separation of spiritual and medical functions decreased shamanic influence at a time when devastating new diseases were decimating populations, as a function of European culture contact, and challenging indigenous medico-spiritual traditions. Traders, whalers, and missionaries potentiated the already serious situation by arbitrarily disseminating medical resources as a means of assuring religious and/or economic dependence and loyalty (O'Neil, 1988).

Although Aboriginal spiritual practices have been syncretically and selectively transmuted, rather than simply supplanted by Christianity, as pragmatism dictated, many underlying traditional spiritual values remain intact. Brody (1987) suggests that shamanic influence and traditional medico-spiritual practices remain surprizingly strong, although concealed or not readily apparent, in the majority of indigenous populations. Aboriginal spirituality has best been described as an attitude or gradually developing awareness and experience of the ultimate mysteries of life and one's place in the universe (Couture, 1994). Each of the cultural areas examined adheres to a substantially more holistic perspective of human nature and spirituality than the reductionistic philosophies of most Western spiritual traditions. In all Aboriginal cultures and communities, daily activities and events were suffused with spirituality and natural and supernatural realms were viewed as contiguous.

A comparison of the diverse North American Aboriginal cultural traditions revealed a remarkable similarity of underlying themes and conceptualizations of spiritual dimensionality. These themes are also consistent with those discovered in the mythological and poetic literature and in the historical context. The predominant themes include: relationships with a cosmic Creator Spirit and a host of other minor deities; harmonious interpersonal relationships; self-awareness; a reverence for all life in the natural world; transcendence; immanence; a spiritual journey, or quest; meaning in life; and an interactive energy process.

Developmental life cycle stage theories are characterized by a progressive sequence of stages, each associated with specific tasks, which involve unidirectional evolution, or a gestalt process of emerging and "becoming". Stages are presumed to be universal and coincide approximately with chronological ages; progression is continuous, cumulative, and may occur gradually or by sudden acquisition. A comparison of Piaget's cognitive stages, Erikson's psychosocial stages, and Kohlberg's moral stages with Fowler's faith stages and Peck's spiritual growth stages revealed significant reciprocal interaction between chronological age and physiological, psychological, social, cultural, and cognitive variables, which influence spiritual actualization. Each stage of spiritual development combines these same elements in a qualitatively different manner.

The primary constraining influence on spiritual growth in children was determined to be the inability to think abstractly during pre-pubescence; consequently, conceptualizations of spirituality are limited to concrete, personified images that can be related to external or affiliated faith traditions of the parental community. Abstract, personal conceptions are restricted to post-pubertal development and are influenced by the identified intervening variables. Awareness of these spiritual mediators will facilitate assessment of spiritual dimensionality and enhance intra-, inter-, and trans-personal relationships. Contemporary conceptualizations of human spirituality cannot be understood without an awareness of the interacting contributory variables, and cumulative nature of stage-related tasks, that are associated with various developmental life cycle perspectives.

Major themes identified in the developmental context include: relationship formation to God (however conceived); relationships with others and the environment; feelings concerning self; transcendence (as going beyond personal boundaries); a process, or journey; immanence (only in post-pubescence); self-actualization; and a sense of meaning and purpose in life. Age, cognitive ability, psychosocial adjustment, moral reasoning, culture, socialization, and past experience were determined to be

factors that promote spiritual actualization. Outcomes included self-worth, control, trust, love, and competence (mastery).

Contemporary theoretical literature yielded a variety of apparently conflicting descriptions of the spiritual dimension; however, differences were primarily contextual and the underlying conceptual attributes were strikingly similar. Two major sources of conflict were identified; one centred on the relationship between the psychological and spiritual dimensions, and the other on the confusion between spirituality and religion. Although some suggest that clear delineation between psychology and spirituality is essential so that the appropriate needs of each dimension can be addressed, others decry separation as the very antithesis of holism. Many psychological skills were considered prerequisite to spiritual maturity and, since spirituality must be made manifest through the psychosocial realm, differentiation is difficult and may depend on the underlying object of relationship rather than on total separation between dimensional boundaries. Religion, a related concept that is frequently associated with spirituality, provides only one of many possible contexts for spiritual expression and, as such, bears a contingent relationship to spirituality.

Conceptualizations of spirituality are dependent upon individual phenomenal existence and experience; they are influenced by sociohistorical, cultural, experiential and developmental factors. Faith was found to be a developmental characteristic which is prerequisite to spiritual actualization in a similar manner to abstract thought, self-identity, and post-conventional morality. Since immanence relates specifically to divinity, it is precluded from inclusion as a provisional criterion of spirituality by all materialistic and monist perspectives; consequently, it was determined to be a contingent attribute which is dependent upon the individual's underlying worldview. Presence, a related concept, was differentiated from spirituality and found to reflect a particular quality of relationship which was characterized by mutuality, humility, empathy, vulnerability, and commitment (Buber, 1970; Fish & Shelly, 1978). Finally, spirituality was considered within the context of contemporary nursing theories.

Prevalent themes discovered in the contemporary theoretical literary context include: relationships to God (however conceived), others, self, and environment (nature); an integrational force; transcendence; immanence; purpose and meaning in life; a journey; and self-actualization. Interactions between subjective spiritual experience and an individual's hermeneutic horizon led to the development of moral values and ethical standards, which was consistent with previously mentioned developmental theories.

Illness, especially chronic and terminal illness, represents an existential crisis and leads to disrupted integration, spiritual disharmony, and a negative behavioural response pattern. Fear, anxiety, grief over actual and anticipated losses, and anger may lead to alienation, social isolation, a sense of powerlessness, or hopelessness and are only some of the forms that suffering can take. Suffering, although itself a negative experience, may act as a stimulus, or as a catalyst, to spiritual actualization and thereby result in a positive experiential outcome. Within many of the great world religions, suffering is considered to be an ineluctable condition of humankind that provides the way to spiritual perfection; this premise is clearly evident within Judeo-Christian and Aboriginal religiospiritual traditions. Conceptualizations, or images, of God (however conceived) that an individual holds, whether at a conscious or an unconscious level, as a function of developmental factors, will have a significant effect on their behavioural responses to an illness crisis, suffering, or impending death. Spiritual well-being cannot be fully attained in situations of chronic or terminal illness until the individual confronts and accepts personal finitude and life in all its circumstances, both positive and negative. Inner resources and social support relationships are crucial to spiritual re-integration during periods of existential crisis.

Although children with chronic or terminal illness are subject to similar influences, their response patterns can vary dramatically from those of adults as a consequence of the interplay between maturational (cognitive, psychosocial, and moral), cultural, sociohistorical, experiential, and spiritual developmental factors.

Conceptualizations of death and familiar images of God (god) also depend on the aforenoted influences and will affect behavioural responses to intractable suffering and imminent death. Once again, loving, supportive relationships are critical to spiritual well-being. Regardless of age, it is evident that illness, suffering, and proximal death provide a context of constant threat across the lifespan.

Dominant themes across the chronic and terminal illness contexts of adult and paediatric populations include: an emphasis on relationships with God (however conceived), others, and self; an integrating energy source; suffering as part of a process, or journey; a search for meaning or purpose in life; and self-transcendence. Spirituality and the related concept of hope were distinguished, and it was noted that the themes abstracted from the illness context are consistent with those revealed in each of the preceding contexts.

Conclusions and Model Development

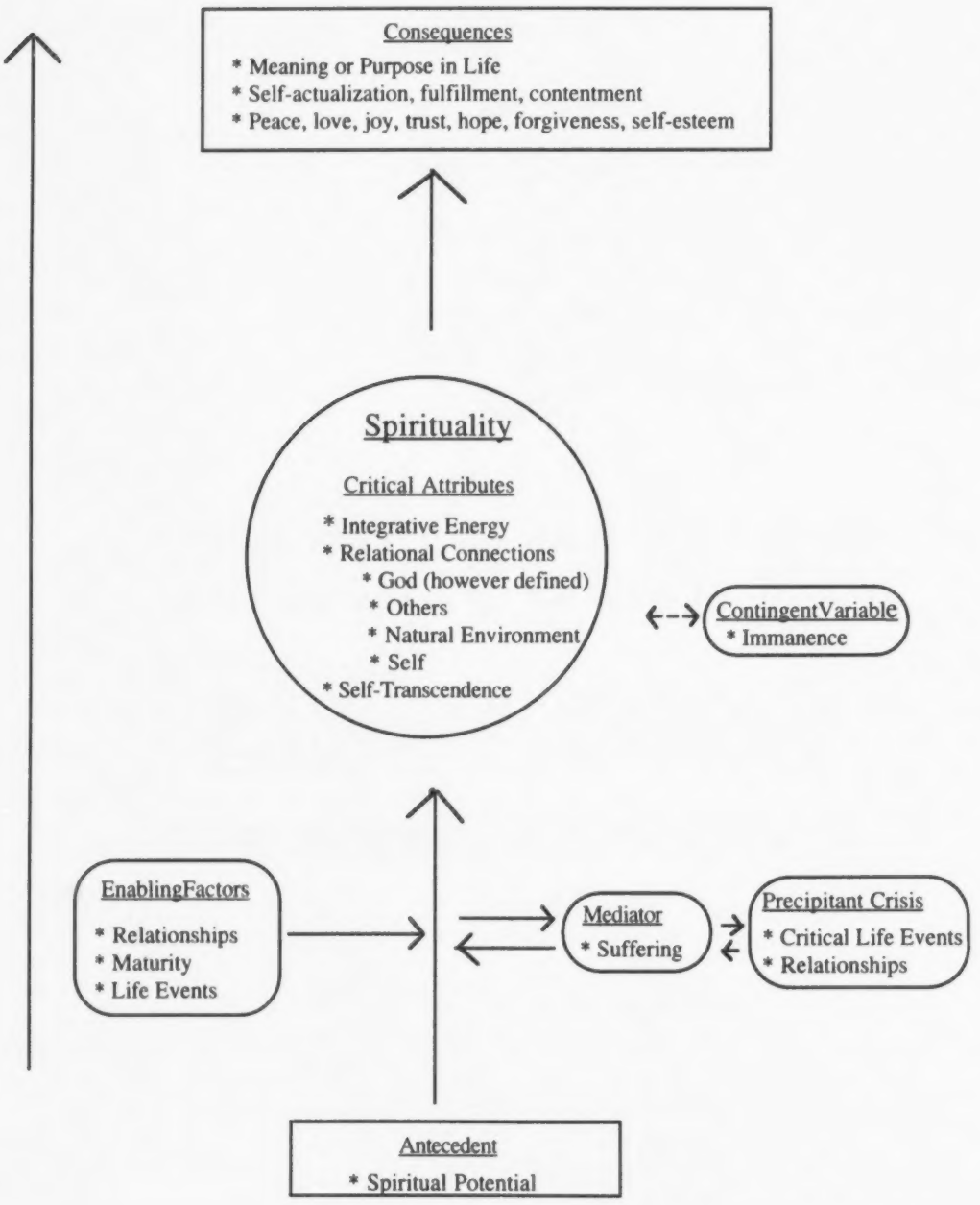
Examination of the selected conceptual contexts within which spirituality was described demonstrates the polysemic nature of cultural linguistics and the inherent plurivocity of textual messages. Of particular import to hermeneutic analysis are the contextual influences presented by historical, social, cultural, maturational, linguistic, experiential, and spiritual factors. Each of these mediating factors has a significant effect on the evolution of conceptual usage and on subsequent textual interpretations. Consequently, it is essential that context be carefully examined as a part of, or prior to, conceptual analysis when increased understanding or the determination of a relatively univocal textual meaning is sought.

A review and compilation of the themes within each of the various contexts led to identification of the following consistently recurring motifs: a relationship to God (however defined); connections to others; harmonious interactions with the natural environment; self-awareness; an integrating force, or energy; a journey, or developmental process; meaning and purpose in life; struggling with adversity, or suffering; transcendence of self; immanence; and self-actualization.

Analytic procedures included the cross-contextual comparison and synthesis of abstracted themes in a search for the essential constitutive characteristics of the phenomenon of human spiritual experience, as defined within a variety of disciplinary and popular literature. The defining or critical attributes, also known as the provisional criteria, are those characteristics which appear repeatedly in the different examples and definitions of the concept (Morse, 1995; Walker & Avant, 1988) and assist in the identification and differentiation of the phenomenon of concern from other closely related concepts. Comparison of the literature across the specified disciplines, contexts, and recurrent abstracted motifs led to the compression of themes into three critical attributes of human spirituality, the identification of attendant outcomes and process, and the development of a conceptual model that illustrates the thematic structure of the spiritual dimension of human beings (see Figure 1, p. 144).

The three provisional criteria of the concept of spirituality were determined to be relational connections, an integrative energy, and self-transcendence. Relational connections include all vertical relationships to God (god, deity, value, or force greater than self), and horizontal relationships with others, the natural environment, and self; consequently, metaphysical, materialistic, and monist philosophical perspectives are all encompassed. Integrative energy is the animating or vital life force that serves a unitive function in combining the biophysical, psychological, spiritual, and social dimensions; as such, it is in a constant state of dynamically changing evolutionary flux. Self-transcendence refers to the experience of going beyond one's personal boundaries, either inwardly through introspection and heightened self-awareness, outwardly through presence and intense mutual sharing with another, or upwardly through an experience of being part of, or one with, God (god) or a power greater than self. Transcendence involves an experience of mystical communion, characterized by the dissolution of spacial and temporal boundaries, that leads to a sense of peace and fulfillment. Identification of these three critical attributes led to development of the following proposed definition of spirituality.

Developmental Process Model of the Human Spiritual Dimension



Spirituality is a universal, innate, integrative energy force, with transcendent potential, that seeks to establish and maintain relational connections with existential and/or metaphysical realms.

Only one antecedent to spirituality was identified in the literature, that which I have labelled spiritual potential. Virtually all of the authors reviewed indicate that spiritual dimensionality is a constitutive element of human nature, despite the codicil which is often added that it may remain unrecognized or dormant (Broccolo, 1990; Carson, 1989; Pierce & Hutton, 1992; Watson, 1988). Haase et al. (1992) suggest the possibility that certain enabling factors such as love, wisdom, and pivotal life experiences can precipitate or retard development of the spiritual dimension. Careful attention to the selected conceptual contexts and the hermeneutic process of textual interpretation permits inferential determination of a number of additional potential enablers of spiritual development, such as maturational factors, personal relationships, faith, hope, religion, and quotidian events. Spontaneous transcendent experiences may arise in early adolescence, as described by Carson (1989) in the developmental context, or may also be precipitated by certain of the aforenoted enabling factors.

Existential crises, generally resulting from some devastating threat or event such as injury, illness, or death of a loved one, often precipitate periods of intense *angst*, the questioning of one's existence, and/or extreme suffering. The suffering experience, although undeniably unpleasant, will affect spiritual actualization, either adversely or positively, and may lead to a favourable outcome. Consequently, the internal struggling that occurs as a function of suffering appears to mediate or transmute the precipitant event. The relationship between spirituality and struggling, or suffering, is one of reciprocity; spiritual reserves can mediate suffering, and struggling can potentially alter or stimulate spiritual development and resources.

Immanence poses a unique problem to understanding the spiritual dimension. On the one hand, it has been identified fairly consistently as a provisional criterion of spirituality; yet, on the other hand, since it is related specifically to divinity, it does not

fit with materialistic precepts. Virtually all references to immanence are related to religious traditions in which it is acknowledged to be an underlying accepted tenet of faith. Although its presence in literary accounts is indisputable, its exclusion in materialist philosophies precludes its inclusion as a defining attribute of spirituality; the importance of the doctrine of immanence, however, suggests that it must be considered as a contingent attribute which is dependent upon the underlying worldview of the conceiver.

Unquestionably, the principle outcome of spirituality noted was the attribution of meaning and a sense of purpose to human existence; alternatively, the loss or inability to find meaning in one's life and/or circumstances was described as the primary cause of spiritual distress (Burnard, 1987; Frankl, 1984). A second major consequence of spirituality was self-actualization, or a sense of fulfillment, satisfaction, and contentment with life. Additional significant outcomes of spirituality, such as love, joy, trust, peace, forgiveness, self-esteem, and hope, many of which can be considered empirical indicators, or referents, of spirituality, were also revealed in the various disciplinary literatures.

Empirical referents are categories or classes of phenomena that demonstrate the existence of the concept in question (Walker & Avant, 1988). Once the referents, or indicators, have been determined, they can be used to formulate precise operational definitions that are accurate, isomorphic representations of the correspondent theoretical definitions (Walker & Avant, 1988); this process forms the initial step in the construction of measurement instruments. In addition to the specified conceptual referents, measures of positively and negatively correlated concepts will also reflect spiritual actualization. Since loneliness, depression, and anxiety have been found to be inversely correlated with spiritual well-being, as previously discussed, they can also be considered indicators of spiritual perspective, or spirituality. Additional scales that presently exist and are related to spiritual integrity include measures of guilt, anger, grief, powerlessness, trust, and religious maturity.

Spirituality has consistently been defined as a dynamic process, journey, or quest which inspires individuals to find meaning in life. The spiritual journey encompasses a continual gestalt process of "becoming" which is mediated by cognitive, psychosocial, and moral developmental factors (maturity), experiential influences, and relational connections. Developmental, experiential, and relational factors may function as enablers of spiritual actualization, while sudden, disruptive, existential crises, mediated by struggle and suffering, will affect spiritual development either positively, or adversely. Although the conceptual model appears to represent change in spiritual perspective as a linear process, a consequence of the two-dimensional diagrammatic constraint, in actuality, it reflects a constant evolutionary state in which outcomes are indefinitely stable and change in response to spiritual actualization. It is a process that requires time and life experience. Therefore, I have labelled the conceptual model that illustrates the thematic structure of spirituality as a developmental process model of the human spiritual dimension (see Figure 1, p. 144).

Implications for the Advancement of Nursing Knowledge

The findings of this research project have several implications for professional nursing practice. The study contributes to the body of nursing knowledge by illuminating, or clarifying, conceptualizations of spirituality; additionally, it recognizes the holistic nature of personhood as an interactive complex of four dimensions (biophysical, psychological, social, and spiritual components). The developmental process model of the human spiritual dimension which I have presented illustrates the thematic structure of the concept, including its antecedents, enablers, precipitant factors, mediators, attributes (critical and contingent), and consequences; it also graphically depicts the essential relational connections which determine the degree of achieved spiritual actualization. It is important for nurses to realize that a precipitating event will lead to existential crisis and suffering, which often acts as a stimulus for spiritual growth. Recognition that relationships provide a source of inner strength and coping ability should alert the nurse to assess the quality of interpersonal interactions,

particularly during periods of extreme situational or existential crisis when facilitation of relational connections is paramount. The introspection and self-reflection that is inherent in spiritual development enhances self-integration and promotes increased self-awareness in both the patient and the nurse, a requisite for "being present" with others. By fostering the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships, nurses may enable spiritual development to begin or enhance further spiritual actualization in their patients. Discerning the values of greatest significance to a patient, whether from overt or covert cues, will help the nurse to understand and relate to the patient, and to promote reconnection to his/her source of transcendent power, thereby increasing spiritual reserves.

Although a number of authors have suggested that most investigations of spirituality originate from within a Judeo-Christian framework, this study has examined the concept across a variety of selected contexts, including polytheistic (mythological, Aboriginal), agnostic or atheistic (historical and contemporary philosophical), and theistic (Judeo-Christian) contexts; conclusions reveal critical conceptual attributes that are atemporal, ahistorical, and acultural. Consequently, nurses can gain a measure of comfort from the recognition that, despite the diverse manifestations of spirituality that abound, the underlying essential relational requirements are universal, just as are the biological, psychological, and social needs. Merely the overt expressions of spirituality are culturally, temporally, and contextually dependent. Several authors described authentic, transcendent spiritual experiences that occurred in the midst of quotidian events and were accompanied by subjective perceptions of situational change and a sense of peace and contentment; therefore, encouraging patients to engage in pleasurable commonplace activities can promote spiritual well-being. It is important for nursing students, educators, and practitioners to realize that, while recognition and awareness of the developmental process inherent in conceptualizations of spirituality is essential to the provision of spiritual care, time, maturity, and life experience are requisite catalysts to the process of spiritual actualization.

Recommendations for Future Research Directions

The model that has been presented reflects the initial research stage of theoretical review and concept development; the next step requires that the proposed relationships between the various model components be tested and developed further. Therefore, it is recommended that the relational connections to God (god), others, nature, and self be investigated from a research perspective that focuses on phenomenal experience rather than theoretical literature. The effect of suffering, as a mediator of critical events, on relational connections and on transcendent, or peak, experiences must also be explored.

Qualitative research methods such as those employed in phenomenological, grounded theory, and ethnographic research studies provide valuable means and opportunities for verification of the proposed model descriptors and relationships. Reed (1992), in a recent article, postulates that spirituality is part of the ontologic foundation of nursing and should be regarded as a basic characteristic of human nature which is essential to health and well-being. She describes an emerging paradigm, derived from extant conceptual, empirical, and clinical knowledge, which can serve as a basis for continued investigation of human spirituality (Reed, 1992). Individuals are viewed from a perspective of *developmental-contextualism* (the antithesis of a mechanistic view), wherein person and environment represent a process which transforms challenging life events into energy for innovative change (Reed, 1992). Themes drawn from the spiritual dimension using this approach include intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal connectedness, and transcendence; these relationships are suggested as potential subjects for future investigation from a developmental-contextualist perspective (Reed, 1992). Reed's (1992) method of study encompasses developmental aspects of spirituality, as earlier identified, combined with hermeneutic and phenomenological methods which have been advocated and employed in the past; as such, it is an appropriate method for investigation of spiritual dimensionality across all stages of the lifespan.

It is recommended that studies be conducted to increase understanding of

experiences of spirituality within each of the life cycle stages. Although much of the theoretical literature concerning faith development has been compared to the various developmental life cycle stage perspectives, the dearth of research reports indicates that few or no research studies have been undertaken to investigate the subjective experiences of minors. Most of the research has involved gerontological populations and descriptions of spirituality; due to the large number of potential maturational influences across the lifespan, it is important to investigate whether the actual experiences of children, rather than just their conceptualizations, vary significantly from those of adults.

The majority of research related to the spiritual dimension has focused on chronic and terminal illness in self or loved 'other', or on the process of dying; however, spontaneous spiritual actualization was described as also occurring in commonplace quotidian events. Therefore, it is recommended that spirituality be explored within a variety of non-crisis situations and health contexts. Additionally, changes in health and behavioural response patterns, subsequent to transcendent experiences, should also be examined.

Since the underlying philosophical orientation and hermeneutic horizon of an individual influences his/her conceptualization of spirituality and the assumed integrational dimensions of personhood, the subjective experiences of self-transcendence and intimate relational connections of individuals across the spectrum of possible philosophical orientations is also recommended. The rise in popularity of feminist philosophies and theories, a corollary of philosophical diversification, suggests that gender also may be an issue that needs to be explored in relation to spirituality; this is appropriate since much of the early theoretical literature reflects masculine and/or Judeo-Christian values and perspectives.

Conceptual clarity and an accurate, acceptable theoretical definition of spirituality are essential to the attainment of nursing's goal in terms of holistic care. A hermeneutic exploration of linguistic patterns of conceptual usage across a variety of selected

contexts has led to increased clarification through the identification of critical attributes of spirituality, the development of a conceptual model illustrating the thematic structure of the human spiritual dimension, and the formulation of a proposed theoretical definition of spirituality, which follows. *Spirituality is a universal, innate, integrative energy force, with transcendent potential, that seeks to establish and maintain relational connections with existential and/or metaphysical realms.* The first stage of the research program, theoretical analysis and synthesis, has now been completed and the stage is set for further research and validation of the conceptual model, its attributes, amplifiers, and mediators. Verification of attributes and empirical referents is requisite for the development of an isomorphic operational definition of spirituality and for the construction of reliable and valid instruments for conceptual measurement.

Although the conceptual model of the human spiritual dimension herein presented is limited by the researcher's level of knowledge and limited experience in theory development and construction, further evolution of the model is anticipated, as a function of continued reflective discourse and clinical validation. The findings have relevance for professional nursing in that they offer a way for nurses to recognize spiritual deficits, enhance spiritual development, and strengthen inner resources of patients through facilitation of connections to God (god), others, self, and nature. The monumental influence exerted by the human spiritual dimension represents a powerful potential healing source and must, therefore, be considered relevant to holistic nursing practice. To dismiss this concept would be to obviate holism as a central disciplinary tenet and dismiss an entire, and vital, dimension of personhood.

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